THE İMRALI POST

You Heard His Name. Learn His Story. Demand His Freedom.

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Sırrı Süreyya Önder passes away

ANF | Istanbul | 3 May 2025

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Deputy Speaker of Parliament and member of the Imralı Delegation Sırrı Süreyya Önder was hospitalized on the night of 15 April following a cardiac arrest.

In a statement on Saturday, the Florence Nightingale Hospital said the following:

"On April 15, 2025, at 10:41 p.m., Mr. Sırrı Süreyya Önder was brought to our hospital by ambulance with no consciousness, respiratory and cardiac arrest, accompanied by cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The patient was immediately diagnosed with "Aortic Dissection" and underwent a Bentall procedure (aortic valve replacement and ascending aorta replacement) and single-vessel bypass surgery. Following the surgery, the patient's hemodynamic stability was maintained in our intensive care unit under ECMO (cardiac support device) and intensive medical treatment. The patient's condition deteriorated rapidly, with worsening neurological symptoms and progression to multiple organ failure.

On the 18th day of his treatment and monitoring in our intensive care unit, Mr. Sırrı Süreyya Önder passed away at 4:10 p.m. on May 3, 2025 due to multiple organ failure. We extend our deepest condolences to his family and all his loved ones."

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S. Süreyya Önder became the language, memory, and conscience of Turkey's politics and Kurdish people

ANF | 3 May 2025

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Deputy Speaker of Parliament and member of the İmralı Delegation of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), passed away at Florence Nightingale Hospital, where he was receiving treatment. Önder had been fighting for his life in the hospital for 18 days.

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who said that "Peace will inevitably come one day, and we will not give up the struggle until that day," was one of the most important figures in the Kurdish political movement in Turkey, known for his resilient and pro-peace advocacy for a democratic society. He also stood out as a masterful representative of art and humor. Standing at the intersection of art and politics, Önder played key roles in peace processes and drew attention with his consistent, dialogue-oriented, and peace-loving stance throughout every period.

He learned about Islam and chose socialism

Born in Adıyaman in 1962, where almost everyone around him was Kurdish, Önder was the child of a Turkmen family. He lost his father when he was eight years old. Önder's father was one of the founders of the Adıyaman branch of the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP). His mother's side of the family belonged to a different tradition, the Islamic pro-Nur sect. These two contrasting traditions shaped Önder's thoughts. In an interview, he said, "My father's side was socialist, my mother's side was pro-Nur; both were outside the system. This allowed me to get to know both, and learn about Islam, but in the end, I chose socialism," summarizing the man who would become Sırrı Süreyya.

The 1980 coup and the years in prison

Önder became acquainted with leftist ideas in middle school and joined revolutionary and socialist groups in high school. In 1978, while still a high school student, he was imprisoned for protesting the Maraş Massacre.

After graduating from high school, he was admitted to the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University. He continued to be involved in "revolutionary politics" in Ankara. He was 18 years old when the coup d'état of September 12, 1980, took place. After the coup, his political struggle became even more intense. The following year, he was imprisoned for his political activities. Serving a sentence in Mamak, Ulucanlar, and Haymana prisons, he endured torture during his seven-year imprisonment and participated in hunger strikes.

Truck driver, filmmaker, politician…

After many years in prison, Önder settled in Istanbul and worked in various jobs, including truck driving, before turning to screenwriting. Önder's interest in cinema and screenwriting began with the film "Duvar" ("Wall" by Yılmaz Güney). "I was inside that wall too; I realized I wasn't alone. Then I started writing," said Önder, blending his personal story with collective memory in this way. Through his education, he learned to channel his anger into art, and thus created his first film, "Beynelmilel" ("International")

Önder gained widespread attention with the film "Beynelmilel" (2006), and went on to work as a screenwriter, director, and actor in productions such as "O… Çocukları", "Düğün Dernek" and "Yeraltı".

In 2011, he entered politics and was elected as an MP for Istanbul with the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) list. In 2013, he became one of the founding members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and served as its deputy co-chair.

For Önder, the Kurdish issue was not merely a Kurdish issue. It embodied all the exploitation, historical oppression, tyranny, authoritarianism, exclusivism, marginalization, and inequality in this country.

He conveyed Öcalan's messages to the public

Sırrı Süreyya Önder was one of the most important actors in the peace talks (resolution process) that took place between 2013 and 2015, serving as a member of the İmralı Delegation. Participating in meetings with the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan on Imrali, he played a significant role in shaping the process and gaining public support for it.

In 2013, he read Öcalan's call for "silence of weapons" at the Newroz celebration in Amed (Diyarbakır).

During the 2013 Gezi Park protests, he stood in front of construction machinery and used trees as cover, declaring, "I am also the representative of the trees," becoming one of the symbolic figures of the resistance.

In the 2014 and 2015 Newroz celebrations, he once again conveyed Öcalan's messages to the public.

He read out the 10-point Dolmabahçe Consensus text in 2015

During the ongoing "resolution process" talks, following a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan and the HDP delegation on February 28, 2015, Önder read out the 10-point Dolmabahçe Consensus text, which was the most concrete step in the resolution process. After the HDP surpassed the electoral threshold on June 7, 2015, and the AKP lost its majority, the process stalled and ended with Erdoğan stating that he did not accept the Dolmabahçe Consensus.

While the Turkish state's attacks on Medya Defense Zones (guerrilla-held areas in northern Iraq) led to the resumption of clashes, in the political arena, pressure and arrests against HDP members increased with the aim of rendering the party inoperable. As a result of the crackdown, the immunity of several HDP members of parliament was lifted in 2016 and hundreds of people, including HDP MPs and politicians, were imprisoned. Among those sent to prison was Önder, one of the most important actors in the peace process.

He paid a price throughout his life but remained committed to peace

Arrested in 2016, Önder told reporters the following upon his arrival at Kandıra Prison: "Even though what is happening seems discouraging, better days are actually coming for the whole country. Every word we say and every effort we make is our honor."

Önder was released in 2019 following a decision by the Constitutional Court that his right to freedom of expression had been violated.

The Court ruling emphasized that Önder was "an important actor in the resolution process, acted as spokesperson for the HDP delegation involved in the process, and that his activities at the time were aimed at ensuring the successful implementation of the process."

When released, Önder said, "Normally, people should be happy at times like this, but part of us is still inside. We will only be able to feel joy when the country takes steps toward democracy and peace. We have said what we had to say, and we will always say it. Nothing can stop us from saying this, because we have spoken what we believe in." He thus demonstrated that he would continue his struggle.

Önder paid a price throughout his life, but he never did anything he didn't believe in. He was a genuine human being, deeply knowledgeable about all peoples and cultures. He was consistent in his art and in his politics. He felt indebted to the land he lived on, and for this reason he never gave up politics or storytelling.

He continued his efforts for peace until his last breath

Despite the health issues he experienced after his release, Önder did not back down from the struggle and was elected as an Istanbul MP for the 28th term with the DEM Party in the 2023 general elections, continuing his efforts for peace and dialogue.

Following the statement made by MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli in Parliament on October 22, 2024, Sırrı Süreyya Önder once again took his place in the İmrali Delegation, for which he had already paid a price, saying, "Peace can only come through dialogue," in reference to the negotiations between Abdullah Öcalan and the state.

Despite recent health problems, Önder continued to play his historic role in the peace process, ignoring his doctors' warnings to rest and slow down, saying, "This country needs peace; working for peace is the best therapy."

Önder was taken to the hospital after suffering a heart attack on April 15 evening. According to a statement from the hospital, the 62-year-old politician was brought to the hospital without a pulse, and his circulation was restored through emergency measures. After being diagnosed with a tear in his aorta, Önder underwent emergency surgery, which lasted 12 hours, during which he received a bypass and an aorta graft.

While Sırrı Süreyya was being sedated in the hospital, Abdullah Öcalan sent a message on April 21. Delivered through Pervin Buldan, a member of the İmralı Delegation, and lawyer Özgür Erol, the message from Öcalan said the following:

"We have worked with Sırrı Süreyya Önder for 12 years. His great importance lies in the fact that, as an ideal resident of Adıyaman and a Turkmen, he represents the tradition of Baba İshak. He is someone who reflects the great efforts for peace to society and who can break down social prejudices in his own person. He has done this. He broke down prejudices in society, in Parliament, and on the streets.

He is able to transform emerging negativity into positivity before it deepens

What we refer to as Anatolian genes and culture is embodied in him. Peace is also about keeping Anatolian genes and the Turkmen tradition alive. Önder is such a person, and this is the true essence of Turkmen identity: the best identity for peace, the best culture for peace. It is the exact opposite of the mindset that says, "Let's insist on creating enemies and conducting politics in this manner."

Önder's culture of coping with negativity and managing it is important; he is able to transform emerging negativity into positivity before it deepens. I see that everyone has visited the hospital where Önder is treated and expressed their loyalty to him. Loyalty requires putting his efforts for peace into practice. Once again, I extend my best wishes to him, his family, his loved ones, and the entire society. I hope he recovers as soon as possible and returns to us in his most enthusiastic and strongest form.

As a matter of his commitment to his struggle, Sırrı Süreyya Önder went down in history as one of the most important politicians who was able to act as a mediator during the most difficult times in Turkish politics, namely during the peace and dialogue processes. His role in the İmralı Delegation became a symbol of the period when Turkey came closest to peace. He became a language, a memory, and a conscience for both Turkey's politics and the Kurdish people.

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Abdullah Öcalan: Sırrı Süreyya Önder's hope can never be left incomplete

ANF | 3 May 2025

Abdullah Öcalan sent a message of condolence for Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a member of the Imralı Delegation of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

Öcalan's message from Imrali is titled 'In memory of Dear Sırrı Süreyya Önder,' and reads as follows:

"With the passing of dear Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a deep sorrow has settled in our hearts. He was a very valuable person, a true child of the peoples. Anatolia and the Turkmen tradition have lost one of their greatest sons; all the communities and peoples of our geography have lost a great comrade. I hold deep respect for his memory.

On 27 February, during our last meeting, he personally took note of the final sentence we added to our call, writing it down with his own hands, and he wanted to read it himself.

He had an unforgettable diligence and devotion to living together in peace. He possessed the rare skill of turning every negative into something positive. He was a true identity and culture of peace.

He knew very well what peace and the peace process could bring to all of us, and this was his deepest longing. This hope can never be left incomplete. What matters for all of us is to carry this spirit into peace and to crown it in the name of Sırrı Süreyya Önder.

Once again, I express my eternal respect for his memory; I extend my condolences to his beloved family, friends, loved ones, and all our peoples.

My deepest condolences to all of us.

Abdullah Öcalan, 3 May 2025"

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KCK: Sırrı Süreyya Önder united the struggle of two peoples

ANF | 4 May 2025

The co-presidency of the KCK Executive Council issued a statement of condolences for Sırrı Süreyya Önder.

The statement said: "It was with great sadness that we learned that the esteemed Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who had been treated in intensive care for 18 days following a severe heart attack, gave his life. Although his

condition was described by his doctors as very serious, we, like everyone else, still had the belief and expectation that the esteemed Sırrı Süreyya Önder would be able to overcome this condition.

Unfortunately, this did not happen. So unfortunately, a very valuable son of our peoples, from whom Turkey had high expectations and who had made significant contributions to the struggle for freedom, democracy, and peace, has unfortunately passed away. We would like to express our deepest sorrow for the loss of such a valuable person who put so much effort into this struggle. We extend our condolences to his family and relatives, to all his loved ones, friends, colleagues, the art-cinema community, the DEM Party to which he belonged, and our peoples. We respectfully bow to his precious memory."

The statement continued: "Sırrı Süreyya Önder was confronted with this serious health setback while carrying out his very valuable work for peace and democracy, and unfortunately, due to it, he gave his life. He is a martyr of the struggle for peace and democracy. Sirri Sureyya Onder was a great person of struggle. He was a socialist, revolutionary, and patriot. His life was spent in the struggle for socialism, democracy, and freedom, and he paid a heavy price for this.

He was, on the one hand, an important pioneer of the socialist movement and the struggle for socialism in Turkey, and on the other hand, he was always in solidarity with the Kurdish people and was an important actor in this struggle. Throughout his life, he succeeded in uniting the struggle of two peoples, thus realizing the most desired and longed-for ideal in Turkey, and he made great contributions to social development with his artistic personality and work. Through his art, he dealt with social reality in a bold and aesthetic way, questioned the existing, and helped develop a depth of thought."

The statement added: "With his life, his art, and his struggle for socialism and democracy, the esteemed Sırrı Süreyya Önder, whose positive qualities can hardly be described in any words, has represented the legacy of pioneers like Mahir Cayan, Deniz Gesmish, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, and Yilmaz Guney and has played a crucial role in ensuring that this very legacy continues today. We commemorate him with respect and bow once again in front of his precious memory. He gave his life in the month of May, which is the month of the martyrs. On this occasion, we also commemorate the martyrs of May and all the martyrs of the revolution and the struggle for democracy with respect and gratitude.

The esteemed Sırrı Süreyya Önder was carrying out and pioneering the important struggle for peace. In view of the fact that he, together with his colleagues and friends, had done so much and such great work towards peace to date, there had still been great expectations of him. While feeling the great pain of losing him, we want to underline that the best way to value his memory is to develop the struggle for peace and democracy he led and bring it to a conclusion. Out of respect for him and our commitment to his ideals, we state that we will make any effort for this. We thereby call on everyone to increase their efforts in the struggle for peace and democracy and the struggle as an expression of attachment to the precious memory of Sırrı Süreyya Önder to bring it to conclusion and make it a success."

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Sırrı Süreyya Önder laid to rest

ANF | Istanbul | 4 May 2025

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a member of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) İmralı Delegation and Deputy Speaker of Parliament, lost his life on May 3, on the 18th day of his treatment in the intensive care unit of an Istanbul hospital following a cardiac arrest on April 15.

Following a memorial service at the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) at noon, the body of Sırrı Süreyya Önder was taken to the Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa Mosque in Şişli. Masses walked from the AKM to the mosque where a religious ceremony was held with the participation of thousands of people.

The crowd attending the religious ceremony at the mosque included DEM Party Co-Chairs Tülay Hatimoğulları and Tuncer Bakırhan, Pervin Buldan, a member of the Imrali Delegation, DEM Party MPs, Meral Danış Beştaş and Ali Kenanoğlu, Co-spokespersons of the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), politicians Ahmet Türk and Leyla Zana, Murat Çepni, Co-chair of the ESP (Socialist Party of the Oppresed), Hakan Öztürk, Chair of the EHP (Labor Movement Party), former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş's wife Başak Demirtaş, Parliament Speaker Numan Kurtulmuş, CHP (Republican People's Party) Chair Özgür Özel, CHP Diyarbakır MP Sezgin Tanrıkulu, former CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, AKP (Justice and Development Party) Spokesperson Ömer Çelik, Chairman of the New Welfare Party Fatih Erbakan, AKP Group Chairman Abdullah Güler, and numerous representatives, officials, and chairpersons of political parties.

Other participants in the ceremony included Ahmet Kaya's wife Gülten Kaya, director Yılmaz Erdoğan, İbrahim Tatlıses, Mahsum Kırmızıgül, historian İhsan Eliaçık, and many actors, artists, writers, and journalists.

In accordance with Sırrı Süreyya Önder's will, İhsan Eliaçık led the funeral prayer.

Following the funeral prayer at the mosque, the crowd set off for Zincirlikuyu Cemetery for the burial.

At the request of his family, Önder was laid to rest in Istanbul. Thousands chanted "The messenger of peace is immortal" as he was laid to rest at Zincirlikuyu Cemetery. People laid flowers on the grave of the pro-Kurdish politician, whose funeral brought peoples together.

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1st of May

May Day in Istanbul: More than 200 people detained

ANF | Istanbul | 1 May 2025

Taksim Square in Istanbul's central Beyoğlu district has been cordoned off by the police since yesterday. All access routes have been closed off with metal barriers. As every year, there is a ban on demonstrations in the square where a massacre took place on 1 May 1977.

The Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK), the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) announced that this year's International Workers' Day would be celebrated in Kadıköy.

Following the call of the May Day Organizing Committee, many unions and institutions took action to enter Taksim today. They were prevented and attacked by the police during an attempt to access the square.

The Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD) Istanbul Branch announced that more than 200 people were taken into custody. Among those detained are ESP (Socialist Party of the Oppressed) Co-Chair Murat Çepni, lawyers Rojhat Tunç, Saruhan Efe Kadaifçi, Lütfi Sabri Batı, Arkın Hürtaş and Yunus Emre Işık.

Members of the construction workers' union İnşaat-İş who gathered in Mecidiyeköy to march to Taksim were also detained.

Young people marching to Taksim and protesting the police attack were handcuffed behind their backs and detained.

Members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed and SOLDEP were detained on their way to Şişli Square.

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TJA's May Day message: Freedom is possible through women's labor

ANF | 1 May 2025

The Free Women's Movement (Tevgera Jinên Azad - TJA), in a statement titled "Democratic life will be built through women's labor," emphasized that this year they mark May Day with the slogan "Insistence on socialism is insistence on the liberation of women's labor."

The statement read: "At the intersection of capitalist modernity and patriarchy, women's labor is not only exploited but also systematically erased. Women shoulder burdens not only in the paid workforce but also in domestic care, agricultural production, migration, war zones, and during moments of crisis."

The statement also condemned the appointment of trustees, emphasizing that attacks on women's labor and institutional achievements continue through these practices.

TJA stated: "Because women's labor is directly linked to political will, it is being deliberately targeted and pushed out of social, cultural, and political life. As the TJA, we redefine the liberation of labor on the basis of women's freedom. Women's labor is not only part of economic production; it is also the force behind rebuilding and transforming society. For this reason, our struggle is the struggle to liberate all forms of labor produced by women, at home, in the streets, in the fields, in schools, in prisons, and along migration paths."

TJA also issued a call to women's movements around the world and stated:

"Let us come together to organize common grounds of struggle. As Kurdish women, we believe that the struggle for equality and justice carried out by women from Latin America to Africa, from Asia to Europe, is one and the same. In different languages and different geographies, we are fighting against male domination, imposed in various forms by the same system. Women's identity and labor can only be defended through a borderless line of freedom. Our labor finds meaning not within the consumption machinery of the capitalist system, but within a democratic, ecological, and women's liberation-centered life. Let us expand our international struggle to liberate women's labor. Let us learn from each other's experiences, make solidarity permanent, and strengthen our organization. Our labor is our organization. A free life is possible through women's labor."

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May Day celebrated in Rojava

ANF | 1 May 2025

Thousands of people took to the streets to celebrate May Day in North-East Syria.

Hundreds of citizens from Dêrik, Koçerat, Girkê Legê, Çilaxa and Til Koçer gathered in Siwêdîkê, while masses from Qamişlo, Tirbespiyê, Til Hemîs and Amudê gathered in Mizgeft from the early hours of the morning.

Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs, Assyrians, Yazidis and other social components participated in the celebrations.

The events started with a moment of silence. The opening speeches made by the preparatory committees emphasized that it was possible to build a democratic society in peace through the common struggle of workers and peoples.

In the event in Siwêdîkê, Cudi Music Group, artists Sumeya Mihemed, Tariq El Hisên, Hesen Dêrik, Waîl Haco, poet Ferhad Merdê and Qereçox Martyrs Dance Group took the stage.

In the village of Mizgeft, Botan, Newroz and Agirî Music Groups, Lawîn Seîd Yûsif, Mehmûd Osman, Mueyed Şiwêş and various dance and theater groups added color to the celebrations.

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More than 400 detained in police attack on masses marching to Taksim

ANF | Istanbul | 1 May 2025

Taksim Square in Istanbul's central Beyoğlu district has been cordoned off by the police since yesterday. All access routes have been closed off with metal barriers. As every year, there is a ban on demonstrations in the square where a massacre took place on 1 May 1977.

Today, the police set up barricades and attacked the groups marching from Şişli to Taksim.

According to lawyers, the number of people detained during the day-long interventions exceeded 400.

According to reports from the ground, nine members of the Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD) are among those detained.

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May Day celebration in Shengal

ANF | Shengal | 1 May 2025

Members of the Shengal Autonomous Administration and People's Municipality attended an event in the Xanesor (Khanasor) town to celebrate International Workers' Day. Masses saluted the struggle against the exploitation of workers.

The press statement read by Sîba Şêx Xidir Municipality Co-Mayor Elmas Nayîf pointed out that sovereign systems enslave workers and weaken society.

Nayîf stated that the Yazidi people have lived by their own labor throughout history and that today's economic and moral struggle is a continuation of this tradition.

The statement referred to Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan's remarks "Labor is freedom" and his February 27 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society', calling it "an important opportunity for workers".

The celebration ended with a message of solidarity to laborers all over the world.

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Bakırhan: We must raise our hope, solution and peace

ANF | Amed | 1 May 2025

Thousands of people participated in the May Day celebration organized by the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK), Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), Union of Chambers of Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) and the Medical Chamber in Amed (tr: Diyarbakır).

Tuncer Bakırhan, Co-Chair of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), congratulated the working people on May Day and commemorated those who lost their lives in the struggle for labor and peace.

'A humane life will come through struggle and common solidarity'

Remarking that laborers increased solidarity with their sweat and labor, Bakırhan said, "You have defended the Kurdish language and identity, you have stood by students' demands for housing. You are the ones who produce and create. You are the ones who beautify. You are the ones who defend and serve the society. As the DEM Party, we reiterate our promise that we will stand by your right to a humane life and your demands. You have always been in solidarity with us, shared with us, and even put your lives on the line. A humane life will not come with favors, but through struggle and solidarity. We believe that by organizing further and by growing our alliances, we will create a country where our working comrades will live humanely."

'Peace cannot exist without labor'

Drawing attention to the economic crisis in Turkey, Bakırhan said, "The biggest bill of this crisis is being paid by laborers, pensioners and employees. Not only are you paying the price of inflation and the economic crisis, but they are also stealing from your pockets, your table, and your bread with new taxes every day due to the transfer of resources to war policies. Therefore, the struggle for labor and peace is one and inseparable. Peace cannot exist without labor. There can be no peace without labor, without laborers. Mr. Öcalan's February 27 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society' essentially means peace that advocates for the rights of laborers, defends justice in the economy, stands against subcontracting and work-related

deaths. It means making women's labor more visible. If we can embrace the 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society' together with the laborers, the oppressed, the retired, the working people, the Kurds, the Alevis, then good days await us. Therefore, it is the duty of you, our working brothers and sisters, to embrace this call."

Öcalan said that 'Capitalism is stealing our hope'

Pointing out that laborers were paying the price of the capitalist crisis, Bakırhan continued, "This brutal order exploits you the most. This capital-friendly order siphons off what you have from your pockets and gives it to a handful of capitalists. In the face of this order, we must stand together and united; we must be organized and strong. We need to grant the rights of laborers, the Kurdish demand for identity, and the Alevis' right to equal citizenship. We talked with Mr. Öcalan on the island of İmralı for 4 hours. It was not only the Kurdish question we discussed at that table. Workers, laborers, women and youth were discussed the most. Mr. Öcalan's 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society' also involves the labour of workers. Mr. Öcalan said exactly this; 'Capitalism is stealing our hope.' Therefore, we have to raise our hope, solution and peace. If we can socialize the call and make peace the agenda and common demand of the laborers - factory by factory, house by house, street by street-, we will achieve beautiful days."

'Kurdish people and the working class of Turkey have to struggle together'

Bakırhan stated that they had no choice but to struggle together and concluded, "DEM Party is struggling for a productive and just economy instead of the current rent-oriented and manipulative economy. The DEM Party is not only fighting for peace. Just as you stood in solidarity with us, we stood by every worker, laborer and comrade who went on strike day and night. Where there are laborers, where there is a struggle, we are closer to attaining our democratic rights. Our salvation is interconnected. In a Turkey where there is no labor problem and laborers get their rights, the Kurdish issue will also be resolved. If salvation is to be achieved together, we have no choice but to fight together. The organized Kurdish people and the organized working class of Turkey have to struggle together. We promised a democratic, peaceful Turkey where the Kurdish question is resolved democratically. We believe that we will achieve it."

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44 people still in police custody after 1 May demonstration

ANF | Istanbul | 2 May 2025

Scores of people were taken into custody on 1 May while trying to demonstrate in Taksim Square.

372 of the 416 people taken into custody were released after security procedures. Eight people were referred to the TEM (counter-terrorism directorate), while 36 people will be referred to the courthouse on charges of "Violation of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations".

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Prisons

Report exposes heavy human rights violations in Tokat Prison

ANF | Urfa | 2 May 2025

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) Urfa (Riha) Branch has publicly released a report detailing heavy human rights violations in Tokat Prison.

Speaking at the press conference held at the association's office, Prison Commission co-spokesperson Serhat Kurt stated that prisoners' right to health is being systematically obstructed and that they are subjected to degrading treatment.

Seriously ill prisoners denied treatment

Kurt emphasized that inmates are being denied hospital transfers and access to healthcare services for refusing oral cavity searches, a practice that violates both the right to life and human dignity. The report reveals that numerous seriously ill prisoners — including those with hypertension, cancer, and heart disease — are not receiving treatment.

Sentences extended for political reasons

The report also notes that the Prison Administration and Observation Board asks prisoners political questions about the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan, and that the answers are used as grounds to delay the execution of their sentences. Some inmates have had their releases postponed multiple times, a practice described as unlawful.

Discrimination, censorship and arbitrary practices

According to the report, political prisoners are being denied the right to phone and video calls, subjected to censorship of books and TV broadcasts, and endure frequent and harassing searches. Requests to be transferred to facilities near their families have been rejected, violating the principle of respect for private and family life.

Call to international bodies

ÖHD has called on the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TİHEK), as well as the Ministries of Justice and Health and the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission to take action. The report stresses the urgent need for effective judicial and oversight mechanisms in response to these violations.

The comprehensive report concludes with 36 recommendations, highlighting the responsibility of Tokat Prison's administration for the documented abuses.

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Yurdagül released after 32 years in prison

ANF | Afyon | 3 May 2025

Cevat Yurdagül was held in the Bolvadin T-Type Prison in Afyon. He was released on Friday after 32 years of imprisonment. He was welcomed outside the prison by members of the Eskişehir Provincial Organization of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), representatives from the Ankara office of the Federation of Legal and Solidarity Associations for Families of Prisoners and Convicts (MED TUHAD-FED), and many of his relatives.

Cevat Yurdagül said that spending 32 years in prison is not something he sees as a personal issue, but rather as part of a much larger question. He said: "If there is a fire in the house, everyone will be affected in some way, and this is what happened to us. I wish that, instead of producing pain, this land had given rise to beauty. But up until now, certain factors have prevented that, and peace has never been realized in this region. Our hope is that peace will finally be established. Perhaps the only thing that has not yet been tried in this land is peace. A process has been initiated; no one knows how it will end, but it gives hope."

Our friends must be released

Cevat Yurdagül addressed the situation of other prisoners, stating: "There are still people in prison who should not be there. Although their sentences have ended, they remain inside due to the arbitrary decisions of prison boards. We hope these friends will soon reunite with their families and reintegrate into society. I sincerely hope they will soon regain their freedom. For me, reconnecting with society, smelling the earth and flowers, and watching the birds in flight are all deeply emotional experiences."

Previously held in prisons in Antep (Dîlok), Çankırı, and Karabük, Yurdagül spent the past five years in the Bolvadin T-Type Prison. His release was postponed three times by the Administrative and Observation Board because he refused to express "regret."

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Uçar: Pit-type prisons are designed to suppress society

ANF | Istanbul | 4 May 2025

The hunger strike launched in protest of the transfer of three members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) to pit-type prisons is ongoing.

Data from the Ministry of Justice shows that there are 43 S-type and Y-type prisons in Turkey. These newly constructed prisons, introduced by the government in 2023, are particularly known for their extremely high walls, which is why they are referred to as "pit-type" prisons. Some of those arrested in the operation carried out against the ESP in January were transferred to these prisons. In response, a hunger strike was launched and is currently being continued by three ESP members.

Sezin Uçar, co-chair of the ESP, told ANF that the regime has built these prisons as a means of suppressing those who take to the streets demanding justice and freedom, and those who raise their voices in protest. Uçar said: "The regime wants to deepen the system of isolation and solitary confinement in prisons in every possible way, targeting the bodies, minds, and wills of the prisoners."

There is intense isolation

Sezin Uçar noted that the physical structure of pit-type prisons is deliberately designed to deepen isolation. She continued: "Unlike other high-security prisons, pit-type prisons impose extremely limited outdoor time. Prisoners are allowed into the yard for a maximum of two hours. They are held in single-person or three-person cells, but most are kept in solitary cells. The walls surrounding the outdoor areas are much higher than those in other prisons. Because the walls are so tall and the ventilation spaces are extremely narrow and confined, making the structure resemble a pit. That is why they are referred to as pit-type prisons."

Preventing the revolutionary life of prisoners

These prisons are built with three floors, and each floor houses individuals prosecuted under different charges. This architectural design poses serious safety risks for the prisoners. For example, someone being tried for alleged membership in a leftist organization might be held on a floor directly above someone convicted of or being tried for membership in ISIS. This is done deliberately and with clear intent. Even those facing the same charges are placed in separate blocks. This is part of a long-standing prison policy by the state, specifically designed to disrupt the communal life of revolutionary prisoners, to prevent them from collectively creating a communal life, and to isolate them from any form of communication and dialogue with one another.

This is not an acceptable system

Lawyer Uçar pointed out that the extremely limited ventilation hours pose a serious problem, especially considering how strictly this rule is enforced for detainees. "Of course, even for those serving aggravated life sentences, these time limits are unacceptable. But it is especially troubling that individuals who are still on trial, who may ultimately be acquitted, are nonetheless subjected to such harsh conditions. Most of these detainees are transferred to pit-type prisons simply because they have had confrontations with prison administration in other facilities, often due to having disciplinary investigations opened against them." She continued: "But what actions trigger these disciplinary measures? Refusing to accept the 'terrorist' label imposed by the administration, protesting something, chanting slogans, submitting petitions, or demanding basic rights. All of these, which are routine actions for a prisoner, are treated as threats. In this sense, this prison regime aims to keep a large part of society under isolation. It is a regime built on seclusion. That is why it must be opposed. From our perspective, and from the perspective of revolutionary socialists, this is absolutely not an acceptable system."

Support must be given to our comrades' action

Sezin Uçar reminded that members of the ESP who have been in detention for the past four months have also been transferred to pit-type prisons, and that their comrades are currently on hunger strike to protest these conditions. She said: "Our Co-Chair Deniz Aktaş, our representative from the Socialist Women's Assemblies (SKM), Tanya Kara, and many of our comrades were arrested and sent to Silivri Prison. On 8 March, numerous disciplinary investigations were launched against them, and many of our comrades were transferred to pit-type prisons. InIn responsse to this attack,, theyey llaunchedunched a a hunger strike. First, they submitted petitions to the Ministry of Justice, requesting to be transferred to a prison near the court where their trials are being held. They rejected the pit-type prison, protested with slogans, and expressed their objection through petitions. They also protested by going on hunger strike. Some comrades ended their hunger strike after being relocated, while others have newly joined. Currently, three of our friends are continuing the hunger strike." Uçar emphasized that this issue should be at the center of attention for all political parties, all segments of the socialist left, and all revolutionary institutions. She said, "This is not just the problem of those who have been sent to that prison. The whole society is being targeted for imprisonment in this form. Society as a whole is being forced to endure an intensified form of isolation. That is why we are calling on everyone to support our comrades' hunger strike, and also to actively participate in the struggle to shut down pit-type prisons."

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Pınar Sakık Tekin: Ill prisoners are fighting for their lives

ANF | Amed | 4 May 2025

The health problems experienced by ill prisoners in Turkey's prisons and the obstacles to their access to treatment remain a major concern for human rights defenders and legal organizations. It is reported that adequate healthcare services are not provided in prisons, treatment procedures are extremely slow, and many seriously ill prisoners are not released even when they meet the conditions for release.

The decisions made by the Administrative and Observation Boards (IGK) and the Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK) keep ill prisoners incarcerated despite medical reports stating they are unfit for prison. As a result of these decisions, many prisoners are unable to access treatment, and their health conditions continue to deteriorate.

The issue of sick prisoners has returned to the public agenda after the meeting held recently between the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) MPs Gülistan Koçyiğit Kılıç and Sezai Temelli, and the Minister of Justice Yılmaz Tunç. According to data from the Human Rights Association (IHD), there are a total of 1,517 sick prisoners in prisons across Turkey and Kurdistan, 651 of whom are in serious condition. According to the Ministry of Justice, 709 prisoners lost their lives due to illness in prisons during the first eleven months of 2024. It is reported that the vast majority of these deaths were not made public, with only 4.5 percent covered by the media.

The 2023 report by the IHD states that at least 6,639 violations related to the right to health were identified in prisons. Among these violations are serious issues such as the refusal of hospital reports by the Forensic Medicine Institute and the failure to postpone the sentences of seriously ill prisoners.

Pınar Sakık Tekin, Co-Chair of the Federation of Associations for Solidarity with Families of Detainees and Convicts (TUHAD-FED), made important statements highlighting the health crisis in prisons.

Prisoners are fighting between life and death

Pınar Sakık Tekin stated that the right to health has been systematically violated for years in prisons and said: "A major health crisis is taking place in Turkey's prisons. Prisoners are fighting a battle between life and death. Today, people whose bodies have been imprisoned are carrying the heavy burden of this struggle. This issue must urgently be brought to the attention of the public. Both the political decisions of the Forensic Medicine Institute and the failures to postpone sentences are making the situation even harder for prisoners. Heavy violations, combined with arbitrary practices, have turned into a form of torture."

The decisions of the Forensic Medicine Institute are not based on conscience

Tekin emphasized that when sick prisoners are taken to the hospital, they are often transported in handcuffs and that their treatments are frequently left incomplete. She stated that the conditions inside prisons further worsen their illnesses.

Tekin also underlined the biased stance of the Forensic Medicine Institute and said: "Even though independent hospital reports state that prisoners are unfit for incarceration, the Forensic Medicine Institute blocks their release based on political motives. This is a grave violation of rights and a crime against humanity. Because of these decisions, prisoners are forced to stay longer in prison, and their illnesses worsen due to the harsh physical conditions and the lack of proper medical care. All living conditions inside the prisons exacerbate their illnesses. Deprived of adequate nutrition and hygienic environments, prisoners are unable to properly access medication or receive necessary hospital transfers."

Ill prisoners must be released without a single day's delay

Tekin underlined that the actual number of seriously ill prisoners is much higher than the announced figures and pointed out that there are many prisoners who have not yet been diagnosed. She shared the names of several of them: "Mehmet Emin Çam, Naif İşçi, Ciwan Boltan, Semire Direkçi, Muhlise Karagüzel, and 85-year-old Mehmet Sıddık Güler are only a few among the seriously ill prisoners. These prisoners are struggling with severe illnesses and are forced to carry on their fight under the harsh conditions of prison. In order to prevent more deaths in prisons, sick prisoners must be released and allowed to continue their treatment outside. Sick prisoners must be freed without a single day's delay. This is a step that must be taken both legally and morally."

Tekin emphasized that considering his age and health condition, Mehmet Sıddık Güler must be released immediately. Speaking about the economic and psychological hardships faced by the families of prisoners, she said: "Families are unable to reach their children and are forced to travel long distances. They live in constant fear of receiving bad news every time the phone rings."

Tekin also stressed the importance of the "Call for Peace and a Democratic Society" made after February 27, stating that the process would remain incomplete if the situation in prisons is not addressed: "A solution process that does not start from prisons is incomplete. Seriously ill prisoners must be released immediately. This is not only the responsibility of the families of prisoners, but a moral responsibility for the entire society. This is a test of humanity. Concrete steps must be taken for this. Taking this step is also a prerequisite for achieving sincere peace."

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Health of prisoner on hunger strike in Iran deteriorates

ANF | 5 May 2025

University professor and political prisoner Hura Nikbakht went on hunger strike on 23 April to protest the growing issuance, approval, and enforcement of death sentences in Iran. She continues her protest with determination. Nikbakht has stated that she has lost 10 kilograms since the start of her hunger strike and that her health continues to deteriorate.

Hura Nikbakht was arrested after being summoned to the General Criminal Court of Evin on 13 June 2024. She was sentenced to one year in prison on charges of "propaganda against the state" and "insulting Iran's religious leader." Nikbakht is also suffering from serious health issues due to uterine cancer.

International human rights organizations and the United Nations report that many Kurdish and Iranian detainees have been executed in Iran over the past year. In addition to Hura Nikbakht, other women prisoners such as Pakshan Azizi, Warisha Moradi, and Sharifa Mohammadi are also under threat of execution. A call has been made to the international community to show solidarity and raise awareness about the prisoners on hunger strike and those under threat of execution.

In a statement released on April 7, the non-governmental organization Iran Human Rights (IHR) reported that the number of executions in Iran more than doubled in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the same period last year.

According to figures compiled by the Norway-based IHR, at least 230 people, including eight women, were executed between early January and the end of March. In the first three months of 2024, 110 executions have been recorded.

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Lawyer Binbir: Political prisoners' releases are arbitrarily blocked

ANF | Amed | 5 May 2025

Turkey's prisons remain among the primary sites of long-standing human rights violations. Arbitrary practices and unlawful execution regimes targeting prisoners persist as deep-rooted structural issues. Currently, 103,179 people are being held in prisons as their releases are being arbitrarily postponed. Although the law requires that prisoners be released after serving three-quarters of their sentences, this legal right is being denied by the Administrative and Observation Boards established under the 2020 penal execution law.

Political prisoners are subjected to loyalty tests with questions like: "Have you obeyed the state? Do you recognize its flag? Are you remorseful?" Such interrogations force prisoners to declare submission. Even trivial pretexts such as "not using water efficiently" or "not borrowing enough books" are used to block their release.

Zeki Binbir, co-spokesperson of the Prison Commission of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), spoke to ANF about the arbitrary practices targeting prisoners and stated: "Prisons have become the main sites of human rights violations. As the Diyarbakır (Amed) Branch of the ÖHD, we have long been carrying out numerous efforts to expose the violations occurring inside prisons, to bring them to public attention, and to ensure they are addressed."

Binbir emphasized that the postponement of releases is especially imposed on prisoners who have been incarcerated for 30 years or more. He said, "When we examine the decisions made by the Administrative and Observation Boards regarding these prisoners, we clearly see that they are enforcing a policy of 'repentance.' The execution of sentences is being delayed with fabricated justifications and excuses. We see this as a form of punishment within punishment."

Administrative and Observation Boards are ignoring the law

Zeki Binbir drew attention to the unlawful conduct of the Administrative and Observation Boards, stating that they are acting as a second court. Binbir said, "The Administrative and Observation Boards have turned into a mechanism that, in effect, hands down punishments and blocks releases, as though they were a second court. In reality, there is no legal basis for this. Nowhere else in the world is there such a practice. It is fundamentally unlawful for individuals who are not judges to make decisions as if they were a court of law. The release of prisoners is being blocked under various pretexts.

These boards are acting in direct violation of the law. Recently, we have seen many cases where releases have been delayed, especially in Erzincan High-Security Prison. In most of these cases, prisoners are being forced to express 'repentance' as a condition for release."

We are resisting rights violations

Binbir stated that as the ÖHD, they are working to raise public awareness about the unlawful practices in prisons. He said, "We are resisting the human rights violations taking place in prisons. In particular, we have ongoing lawsuits demanding the annulment of the decisions made by the Administrative and Observation Boards. We believe this is rooted in a political mindset maintained by the state. The state is trying to suppress the Kurdish population through these practices. This is clear, as sentence postponements are applied exclusively to political prisoners."

The state must now take action

Binbir also addressed the call made by Abdullah Öcalan and concluded his remarks as follows: "There is a process that has developed following Mr. Öcalan's call on February 27. This process must be properly understood, and the government must take appropriate steps in response. What is happening in the prisons today is unlawful. The government must act urgently on this issue.

In particular, Mr. Öcalan's right to hope must be recognized. We are currently witnessing a positive development. For this process to move forward, the state must finally take action. First and foremost, this means ensuring the freedom of Mr. Öcalan, who is in Imralı Island, and the immediate release of prisoners who have been incarcerated for 30 years as well as those who are seriously ill."

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Three Kurdish political prisoners in Iran moved in secret to remote exile prisons

ANF | 5 May 2025

Kurdish political prisoners Vahid Chavaran, Nasser Rezaei and Mohammad Hassan Hasseli, who were sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in exile following their arrest during the anti-government 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom) uprising, have been secretly transferred to remote prisons across Iran.

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that on 4 May, Chavaran, Rezaei and Hasseli were transferred from Ilam Central Prison to Zahedan Prison in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Kerman Prison in Kerman Province and Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad, Razavi Khorasan Province, respectively, without prior notification to their families.

On the same day, a fellow prisoner called their families to inform them of their transfer.

On 8 January 2024, the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Ilam, presided over by Judge Rajab Mohammad, sentenced each of them to 12 years of imprisonment in exile on charges of "enmity against God" (moharebeh) and "acting against national security".

Their sentences were later upheld by the Supreme Court in February 2024.

On 4 September 2023, the three went on a hunger strike in protest at their continued detention in the pre-trial detention centre of Ilam Prison, sewing their lips shut the next day.

Chavaran, a mountaineer from Sarabbagh, was arrested by security forces while trying to leave the country on 23 June 2023 and taken to the Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Ilam.

Rezaei, from Abdanan, Ilam Province, was arrested on 13 August 2023 after being summoned to court in Dehloran, Ilam Province. He was also briefly detained by security forces on 22 May 2023.

Hasseli, from Sarabbagh in Ilam Province, was arrested by security forces on 26 July 2023.

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IRGC blocks furlough of Kurdish political prisoner despite approval

ANF | 6 May 2025

The Intelligence Organisation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has prevented the temporary leave of Kurdish political prisoner Khaled Zamani, despite the approval of the prison authorities and the prosecutor in Yazd Province, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported.

Zamani, who is currently serving the 17th year of a 30-year sentence in Yazd Central Prison, had received permission for a temporary leave from the prison's Classification Council and the city's prosecutor.

His family also provided a substantial bail of 100 billion rials (nearly 125,000 USD). However, the IRGC's intelligence branch intervened to block his release.

Zamani has consistently been denied both conditional release and furlough due to opposition from the IRGC.

This is not the first time that Zamani has been denied his legal rights. Despite having served more than half of his sentence, previous applications for conditional release have also been denied due to interference by the IRGC's Intelligence Organization.

Zamani was arrested by security forces on 30 June 2008 and interrogated and severely tortured for several weeks at the Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Khoy, West Azerbaijan Province.

Later, Branch One of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Khoy – presided over by Judge Nowrouzi – sentenced Zamani to "amputation of the left arm and the right leg" on charges of "enmity against God" (moharebeh) through alleged membership of the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK).

However, following his appeal, the Supreme Court overturned the sentence.

Later, in a retrial, the Appeals Court of West Azerbaijan Province sentenced him to 30 years' imprisonment and exile in Yazd Central Prison.

Following the confirmation of the sentence, Zamani was transferred from Maku Prison to Yazd Central Prison on 21 December 2009.

Despite persistent efforts by his lawyer in recent years to obtain a retrial under a new provision of the Islamic Penal Code, the request was rejected by the Supreme Court.

Zamani is a co-defendant of Fasih Yasamani, another Kurdish political prisoner, who was executed in Khoy Prison on 8 January 2010.

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Petition for Pakshan Azizi sentenced to death in Iran

ANF | 7 May 2025

Several people from Eastern Kurdistan and the diaspora have launched a petition calling for the death sentence handed down to Pakshan Azizi to be overturned.

The organizers of the campaign emphasized that Azizi's life is in serious danger and called on all segments of society, institutions, and individuals to support the campaign.

The petition calling for action for Azizi reads as follows:

"Let's not forget Pakhshan Azizi. The risk of execution is serious.

Azizi, a journalist and women's rights activist from Mahabad and a graduate of social work from Allameh Tabatabai University of Tehran, was arrested and sentenced to death for her voluntary and humanitarian activities among the refugees of the ISIS war.

Following the statements of her lawyers regarding the hasty proceedings in the Supreme Court, the risk of execution is serious for her.

We, the signatories of this petition, want the immediate cancellation of her death sentence and we ask everyone to join us to save the life of Pakshan Azizi.

By signing this statement, 187 women, workers, teachers, petitioners, pensioners and freedom-loving people have requested the cancellation of the death sentence of Pakshan Azizi.

Please join the online petition against the death sentence of Pakshan Azizi."

Pakshan Azizi

Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced Pakshan Azizi to death on 23 July, 2024. She was convicted of "armed rebellion against the state" (*baghi*) solely in relation to her peaceful human rights and humanitarian activities. For instance, between 2014 and 2022, she was involved in providing humanitarian support to women and children displaced following attacks by the Islamic State (IS) and sheltering in camps in northeast Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. On 8 January, 2025, the Supreme Court upheld her conviction and death sentence. Her request for judicial review was subsequently rejected by Branch Nine of the Supreme Court.

On 4 August 2023, Ministry of Intelligence agents arbitrarily arrested Pakhshan Azizi in Tehran and transferred her to section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, and held her in prolonged solitary confinement for five months without access to a lawyer and her family. According to informed sources, during this time Pakhshan Azizi was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment during interrogations. Agents repeatedly told her that she had no right to live and threatened to execute her. They also subjected her to gender-based violence in order to compel her to make forced "confessions" of having ties to Kurdish opposition groups, which she repeatedly denied. In early December 2023, she was transferred to the women's ward of Evin prison, where she has been held since.

In an appeal on 7 February, Amnesty International said, ""The international community must immediately urge the Iranian authorities to halt the execution of arbitrarily detained humanitarian aid worker Pakhshan Azizi, who was sentenced to death following a grossly unfair trial before a Revolutionary Court last year."

"Pakhshan Azizi was detained solely in relation to her peaceful human rights and humanitarian activities, including providing humanitarian support to women and children in northeast Syria who were displaced following attacks by the Islamic State armed group. Instead of facing imminent execution, she should be immediately and unconditionally released," stated Amnesty International, pointing out that the Iranian authorities remain adamantly resolved to use the death penalty as a tool of political repression to instil fear among the population.

"The death penalty is abhorrent in all circumstances; but imposing it after a grossly unfair trial before a Revolutionary Court, in which Pakhshan Azizi's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, including gender-based violence, have gone uninvestigated, renders its use arbitrary and illustrates yet again the Iranian authorities' shameless disregard for the right to life. Governments worldwide must speak out loudly now against this injustice to halt Pakhshan Azizi's execution before it is too late."

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Kurdish political prisoner with cancer on hunger strike over denial of medical leave

ANF | 7 May 2025

Motalleb Ahmadian, a 42-year-old Kurdish political prisoner serving the 15th year of a 30-year sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison, went on a hunger strike on 5 May, protesting the Tehran Prosecutor's refusal to grant him medical leave or suspend his sentence despite his deteriorating health.

Ahmadian suffers from a number of serious illnesses, including duodenal cancer, diaphragmatic hernia, spinal canal stenosis, and a urinary tract infection.

According to the Forensic Medicine Organisation and prison medical staff, he needs urgent surgery and a long recovery period outside prison.

At the beginning of his hunger strike, Ahmadian published an open letter describing his medical condition and accusing the Tehran Prosecutor of obstructing his treatment.

Full text of the political prisoner's letter, released by the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN), reads as follows:

My name is Motalleb Ahmadian. I am 42 years old and I am from Kurdistan.

I have been serving my sentence in the prisons of the Islamic Republic for over fifteen years. During this time, I have witnessed countless violations of my rights and the rights of other prisoners. In the first year of my imprisonment alone, I endured severe physical and psychological torture – from having my teeth smashed to being beaten so severely on the back that three vertebrae in my spine were broken – a permanent reminder of that time.

From the beginning of my struggle against the prevailing oppression and injustice, I always had two choices. Either I could remain silent and accept the oppression and discrimination, or I could stand up to it and fight to change the status quo.

I chose to resist. I stood my ground, and the price I paid for that choice was a 30-year prison sentence, half of which I have now served. Today, however, I face a different kind of dilemma.

For some time now, I have been suffering from a tumour in my duodenum, which has caused severe digestive problems. These complications have forced me into extreme dietary restrictions and reliance on strong painkillers, which in turn have caused further damage to my body. I have made several attempts to get proper treatment.

According to the prison infirmary, the Forensic Medicine Organisation and several doctors, I need urgent surgery. This includes open surgery on my diaphragm, stomach and umbilical hernia, which will have to be done in several stages.

I also urgently need surgery on the three fractured vertebrae in my spine and spinal canal.

Doctors and the Forensic Medicine Organisation have confirmed that the recovery period for these operations must take place outside of prison.

Despite the fact that seven lawyers and government officials have agreed to act as guarantors, and that my family has secured a bail of 50 billion rials (the maximum they can afford), the Tehran Prosecutor has refused to suspend my sentence to allow for medical treatment.

Faced with this situation, I have decided to stand up not only for myself, but in solidarity with all prisoners who are denied their fundamental rights and human dignity, in particular the right to timely and adequate medical care, and to go on hunger strike from Monday 5 May 2025 in protest at the blatant violation of my rights.

It is clear that the responsibility for the consequences of this hunger strike lies with the judiciary, the Prison Organisation, and the security services.

Motalleb Ahmadian

Political Prisoner – Ward 4, Evin Prison

Deprivation of Medical Care: Ahmadian's Critical Condition

Ahmadian, a Kurdish political prisoner suffering from duodenal cancer, diaphragmatic hernia, spinal stenosis and urinary tract infection, has lost over 35 kilos due to the continued denial of specialist medical care. His condition is now considered critical and worrying.

In June 2024, he was transferred once to a medical facility outside prison, but was returned to Evin Prison before his treatment was completed.

Ahmadian has long highlighted the impact of medical neglect on his deteriorating health. In a letter written in January 2020, Ahmadian described his worsening health condition, attributing it to the denial of timely medical care. He noted infections in the testicular region and fractures in three vertebrae caused by torture during detention.

He wrote: "Unfortunately, the prison authorities refused to cover the costs of my surgeries and medications. According to the Prisons Organisation's regulations, these expenses should be borne by the prison, but I had to pay all costs myself. Due to financial constraints, I stopped seeking further treatment."

Ahmadian, from Baneh, Kurdistan Province, was arrested on 5 October 2010. After eight months in solitary confinement under severe physical torture at security detention centres in Sardasht, Saqqez, and Sanandaj, he was sentenced to 30 years in prison and exile to Minab Prison on charges of "enmity against God" (moharebeh) due to alleged membership of the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

Additionally, in two separate cases, he was sentenced to one million rials in fines and one year in prison for "unauthorized crossing of the country's borders" and nine years in prison, half a full diya (blood money), and a 200-million-rials fine for "complicity in murder".

Since his arrest, Ahmadian has been held in the prisons of Saqqez, Sanandaj, Rajai Shahr, and Evin.

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Military aggression and occupation

SDF forces thwart an ISIS attack in eastern Deir ez-Zor countryside

ANF | 1 May 2025

On Wednesday, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) successfully thwarted a terrorist attack launched by ISIS cells targeting one of their positions in the town of Gharanij, Deir ez-Zor's eastern countryside.

"Clashes erupted between our forces and the attacking terrorist cell. Due to our forces' fire, the terrorists fled the area, leaving behind weapons and ammunition. Several terrorists were injured during the confrontation," said the SDF Media Center.

The SDF reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to maintaining security and stability in our regions, stating: "We will continue to pursue terrorist cells, eliminate their threats, and dismantle their sources of support and safe havens."

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74 people killed in Damascus in 48 hours

ANF | 1 May 2025

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Adem Abdülmewla, expressed concern over the violence in the Damascus countryside and condemned the killing of civilians.

Ebdülmewla said that the spread of violence in the Sweida province threatens the safety and peace of civilians, worsens the humanitarian situation and jeopardizes hard-won gains, and that under no circumstances should humanitarian aid and health workers be targeted, as this is against international and humanitarian law.

Ebdülmewla called on all parties to exercise restraint and take measures to protect civilians and workers working in the affected areas.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), 74 people were killed in clashes in the Damascus countryside in the last 48 hours.

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Israel bombs area around Presidential Palace in Damascus

ANF | 2 May 2025

Israel bombed an area around the Presidential Palace in Damascus. This attack followed an accusation from a Druze leader, who accused Syria's new president, Ahmed Al-Shara, of committing "genocide."

Syria's most influential Druze religious leader, Sheikh Hikmat al-Hajri, said in a Thursday announcement that an "unjust campaign of genocide" targeting civilians was underway.

The Druze cleric then called for "immediate intervention from international powers."

He also said: "We no longer trust an entity that claims to be a government. A real government does not turn to its extremist militias to massacre its own people and then claim these were uncontrollable elements."

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), more than 100 people were killed in attacks and clashes earlier this week that targeted the Druze population.

Israel, which is technically still at war with Syria, had threatened to "respond forcefully" if Damascus failed to protect this religious minority.

A few hours later, at dawn on Friday, the Israeli military announced on Telegram that "fighter jets struck the area around the presidential palace."

A clear message

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz issued a joint written statement saying: "This is a clear message to the Syrian regime. We will not allow forces to be deployed to the south of Damascus or any threat to the Druze community."

UN calls for calm

The United Nations called on "all parties to exercise maximum restraint," while U.S. diplomats condemned the "recent violence and inflammatory rhetoric" against the Druze as "reprehensible and unacceptable."

This week's clashes in Jaramana and Sahnaya, home to Christian and Druze populations, and in the Druze-majority Suwayda, revived memories of massacres earlier in March in western Syria, where over 1,700 people, mostly Alawites, were killed.

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Mother tongue education continues in spite of attacks

Roj Deniz | Aleppo | 2 May 2025

At the onset of the Syrian crisis and with the unfolding of the Rojava Revolution, one of the areas most severely impacted was education. In the neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxmaqsûd) and Ashrafieh (Eşrefiyê), thousands of students were forced to leave their schools as a result of heavy attacks carried out by both Turkish state-affiliated mercenaries and the Assad regime.

This was not only due to direct bombardments; critical infrastructure was also destroyed, and among the ruins were school buildings. In both neighborhoods, all schools were either completely demolished or rendered unusable for education. In spite of all these hardships and the continued shelling by mercenaries linked to the Turkish state, the people did not give up their resistance. Teachers and students became part of this resistance. Even during the most difficult times, a few teachers and students continued their lessons under bombardment, in their own homes, with the aim of preserving and spreading their language.

Zehida Rashid, co-chair of the Education and Teaching Committee in Aleppo, spoke to ANF about the current state of education in the neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh. She explained that the education system in both neighborhoods operates based on an evaluation model and that all students receive instruction in their mother tongue.

Rashid spoke about the educational process during the time of resistance in Sheikh Maqsoud. She stated, "In Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh, the education system operates based on evaluation principles. During the war, both us and the students faced extremely difficult conditions. On one side, there were attacks by Turkish state-affiliated mercenaries, and on the other, the Assad regime had besieged the neighborhoods. Because of this, reaching schools was a major challenge; even finding notebooks and books was difficult. The siege lasted for years. At one point, only two schools remained in the neighborhood, and they were operating with materials provided by the Assad regime. Even in those schools, only three hours of Kurdish lessons were allowed per day."

1,500 students in two neighborhoods

Zehida Rashid recalled that after the occupation of Afrin (Efrîn), many residents were forced to migrate to Shahba and Aleppo, which led to the opening of new schools in the area. She said, "With the migration of Afrin's people to Shahba and Aleppo, the Martyr Qereman Primary School was opened in the neighborhood. At that time, the school had only eight students. Later, a few more schools were established. In 2023, the Martyr Zozan Education Center was opened. These schools follow an evaluation-based education model. Kurdish students receive instruction in Kurdish, while Arab students are taught in Arabic."

Rashid explained that with the second wave of displacement from Afrin, the number of students increased. As a result, a middle school was also opened. She added, "Currently, there are around 1,500 students and 338 teachers in the two neighborhoods. Even during the war, there were teachers who volunteered to continue teaching. However, the schools suffered heavy damage as a result of intense attacks on the neighborhood. In spite of everything, we rebuilt our schools with the few resources we had and continued educating our students. We persevered through the difficulties and tried to keep our mother tongue alive."

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Turkish army attacked guerrilla areas 1084 times

ANF | Behdinan | 2 May 2025

The HPG Press Center said that the Turkish army bombed the Medya Defense Zones three times using banned explosives, five times with warplanes, and 1,076 times with heavy weapons, artillery, and howitzers.

According to the HPG statement, the attacks with banned explosives occurred on April 29 and May 1, when tunnels in the Girê Amêdîyê Resistance Area of the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were bombed three times.

The Turkish army carried out airstrikes on April 28, 29, and 30, targeting the Girê Bahar Resistance Area in the same region five times.

As for the heavy weapon attacks, on April 29, 30, and May 1, the Berê Zînê, Lolan, and Sinînê Resistance Areas of the Xakurkê region were hit 42 times; the Girê Zengil, Girê Reşît, Zêvkê, Girgaşê, Spîndarê, Mijê, and Dêreşê areas of the Garê region were bombed 90 times; the Şêlazê, Bêşîlî, and Serê Metîna Resistance Areas of the Metîna region were bombed 417 times; and the Girê Amêdîyê and Girê Bahar Resistance Areas of the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were targeted 527 times. In total, there were 1,076 bombardments with heavy weaponry.

On April 29, 30, and May 1, the Turkish army also used crushing and drilling excavators to attack tunnel positions in the Girê Bahar and Girê Amêdîyê Resistance Areas.

In response, on April 29 at 15:30, HPG forces destroyed a drone loaded with explosives in the Sinînê Resistance Area of the Xakurkê region. At 13:30 and 13:45 the same day, in the Bazê Resistance Area of Metîna, YJA Star forces struck targets using automatic weapons and sniper tactics, damaging one position and destroying a surveillance camera.

Also on April 29, HPG forces fired on excavators attacking tunnel positions in the Girê Bahar Resistance Area, damaging one excavator. On April 30 at 15:05, in the Girê Amêdîyê Resistance Area, HPG forces responded with a special tactic to Turkish forces calling for surrender, hitting one of their positions.

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TEV-DEM condemns attacks on Druze Community

ANF | 2 May 2025

The Democratic Society Movement (TEV-DEM) issued a written statement regarding the attacks on the Druze community in the rural areas of Damascus and Sweida.

The statement drew attention to the situation that emerged after the fall of the Baath regime: "This situation has raised hopes for the construction of a democratic, equal, decentralized, and unified Syria. However, it is evident that a neo-Ottoman-backed Muslim Brotherhood Sunni Islamic mentality has taken root in Damascus."

TEV-DEM said: "More than 30,000 Alawite citizens have been sacrificed at the hands of the Damascus regime under the guise of operations against remnants of the regime. On the one hand, massacres are being committed, while on the other, the regime sheds tears for the victims as if they were killed independently of its own politics. In an effort to prevent further massacres and civil war, the SDF signed an agreement with Ahmad al-Sharaa. However, what we have seen so far raises doubts about the seriousness of Damascus. Recently, attacks have been carried out against the Druze components under the pretext of so-called uncontrollable groups; over 100 Druze civilians and security personnel have lost their lives in Ceremana, Ashrafieh, and rural Sweida."

TEV-DEM called on all components of society "not to fall victim to genocide plans and policies" and urged the expansion of the struggle "for a democratic, equal, just, and decentralized Syria, to remove the darkness imposed on women, youth, peoples, and cultures."

They also called on the international community, institutions, and democratic circles "to support the building of a democratic Syria, to stop Turkey and ISIS's genocide plans, and to take action to prosecute those responsible."

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Airstrike on Damascus convoy in Suwayda

ANF | 2 May 2025

An Israeli airstrike reportedly targeted a military convoy belonging to the Damascus government in the western countryside of Suwayda, a city in southern Syria.

According to local sources, the attack occurred near the village of Kenakir. The targeted convoy was said to belong to Syria's "General Security" units.

Israeli media reported that the strike was carried out by the Israeli military and that the convoy was hit while en route to Kenakir.

Other positions belonging to Damascus forces were also reportedly struck, with unmanned aerial vehicles or mortars used in these attacks.

Other sources stated that at least two people were killed in the strike, although no official statement has been released yet.

Meanwhile, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), more than 100 people were killed earlier this week in attacks and clashes targeting the Druze community around Suwayda.

Israel had previously issued a strong warning to the Damascus government, accusing it of failing to protect the Druze and vowing a forceful response.

On Friday morning, the Israeli military also announced via Telegram that it had targeted areas around the presidential palace.

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Vigil at Tishrin Dam successfully brought to an end

ANF | Tishrin | 5 May 2025

Since 8 January, civilians from North-East Syria have been holding a vigil at the Tishrin Dam to protect their territory alongside the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Women's Defense Units (YPJ), who are confronting attacks by the Turkish army and allied mercenaries called the Syrian National Army (SNA) ongoing since 2024. Every day, people from different walks of life go to the dam to provide moral support and defend it. Women and mothers are at the heart of the popular resistance.

In a statement on Monday, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria said that through violent attacks directed against the life resources and infrastructure of their region since January 2025, the occupiers aimed to break the will of the freedom-loving peoples.

The statement continued: “Hostile attacks have intensified around the Tishrin Dam, systematically carried out by the occupying Turkish state and its mercenaries. The Tishrin Dam is the region's largest source of energy. Attacks on this dam, which serves millions of people, have been met with resistance from the Kurdish, Arab, and Syriac peoples.

On January 8, hundreds of people, mainly women's and youth organizations, headed to the Tishrin Dam to join the resistance to protect the gains of the people. Our people, who formed a shield around the SDF and YPJ forces, have since protected their gains in a spirit of mobilization.

This resistance enabled heroic epics to be written in the war. Through this resistance, the people of North and East Syria proved that they would not accept a life of dishonor. The Tishrin Dam became a place where young people wrote revolutionary epics. This resistance, which will be written in gold letters in the pages of history, was achieved through the efforts of dozens of martyrs.

We bow with respect before the memory of the martyrs Menice, Kerem Şehabi, Harûn, Eziz Ereb, Bavê Teyar, and Ronahî Efrîn. We honor all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives on the path to freedom. We wish a speedy recovery to all the wounded. We promise that their efforts will not be in vain.

This resistance, which has continued with great sacrifice for over 100 days, has brought about significant gains. We proudly announce that this resistance has achieved victory, paved the way for new victories, and thwarted further threats.

As the Autonomous Administration, we salute everyone who contributed to this resistance.

We also salute the efforts of the healthcare workers who have worked tirelessly during this process. We respectfully commemorate the sacrifices of the press workers in the persons of Cihan, Nazım, and Egid Roj. We salute the free press workers who stand with their people and serve as their voice.

The Tishrin Dam has become a symbol of national unity. It stands as a living example of resistance against the Turkish state and its mercenaries."

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ISIS terrorist leader captured in Deir ez-Zor's eastern countryside

ANF | 5 May 2025

On May 2, Friday, the Military Operations Teams (TOL) of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with support from the International Coalition, conducted a precise and targeted security operation in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor, targeting a high-ranking leader of the terrorist organization ISIS named Hamoud Abdullah al-Khatib, aka Abu Zakaria.

In a statement about the operation, the SDF Press Center said: "The terrorist, Abdullah, served as the so-called "emir" of an ISIS cell operating in the economic sector. He extorted money from civilians at gunpoint under the pretense of collecting "zakat," and threatening those who refused with death."

Based on accurate intelligence and close surveillance, SDF forces tracked the movements of the terrorist, identified his location, and successfully encircled and captured him, and sized a significant cache of weapons and ammunition, including:

5 RPG launchers; 38 RPG rounds; 40 RPG warheads; 1 LAW anti-tank weapon; 2 hand grenades; 13 ammo can of AKC; 3 ammo can of DshK; 1 ammo can of BKC; 17 ammo box of 9mm pistol; 18 magazines of AK-47 rifle; 9 magazines of AKC rifle; 26 ammo boxes of AKC; 7 rounds of 8mm pistol; 2,450 rounds of BKC; 260 AK-47 rounds; 1 rifle scope; 3 BKC machine guns; 1 Russian sniper rifle; 1 AKC rifle; 2 AK-47 rifles; 2 8mm pistols; 4 magazines of 8mm pistols; 2 9mm pistols; 5 magazines of 9mm pistols

The statement added: "Our forces reaffirm their commitment to dismantling ISIS cells, targeting its infrastructure and support networks, cutting off its material and ideological resources, and safeguarding the security and stability of the region under all circumstances."

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HPG: Turkish army launched 9,790 attacks on guerrilla areas in April

ANF | Behdinan | 5 May 2025

The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) released the balance sheet of war for April. Despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) on March 1, the Turkish army has continued its attacks on guerrilla areas in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on a massive scale. According to the balance sheet, HPG recorded 9,693 attacks on guerrilla positions in the past month, in addition to dozens of attacks by warplanes, helicopters and explosive-laden drones. Turkish attacks, in which chemical substances, phosphorus bombs, and other banned weapons were also used, left four guerrillas dead, two of them in a chemical weapons attack.

The HPG balance sheet includes the following:

"The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, who represent the hope of our people for a free future, have entered a ceasefire position as of March 1, 2025, in response to Rêber Apo's (Leader Abdullah Öcalan's) call, and have approached this process with great sensitivity to ensure that this historic call is met in practice. Over the two-month period following the declaration by the People's Defense Center Headquarters Command, all our forces have acted in accordance with the ceasefire decision. In this sense, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has fulfilled the requirements of this sensitive process with great patience and sacrifice.

The Turkish army took advantage of the ceasefire and resorted to immoral methods

Throughout March and April, the occupying Turkish army took advantage of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla's ceasefire and resorted to immoral methods, insisting on the policy of annihilation. Despite mobilizing all its forces, the occupying Turkish army failed to break the historic guerrilla resistance and suffered defeat in the Western Zap region, the heart of Zap, at the hands of the guerrilla forces. As a result, the occupying forces intensified their attacks on the tunnels and positions in the resistance areas. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla have responded appropriately within the framework of legitimate self-defense and prevented the occupiers from advancing. Unable to overcome this magnificent resistance, the occupiers once again violated the rules of war, using chemical weapons, banned explosives, and banned phosphorus bombs against our forces.

The invaders failed to achieve their goals

The invaders, who were encountered by Apoist militants in every inch of the sacred Kurdistan soil they set foot on, failed to achieve their goals despite attacking guerrilla areas using techniques capable of destroying

cities. Our comrades Besê and Mîtra, who became immortal as a result of a chemical attack by the occupying Turkish army, and our comrades Xebat, Goran and Egîd, who duly responded to the occupiers and fought until the last moment in a wounded state, have become symbols of the Apoist will and invincibility, waving the victory flag of the PKK and PAJK and bringing pride to our people.

Guerrillas thwarted dozens of operations in Northern Kurdistan

As in the Medya Defense Zones, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla have successfully practiced Democratic Modern Guerrilla Warfare in Bakurê (Northern) Kurdistan, thwarting dozens of operations carried out by the occupying forces with all their war techniques and thousands of occupiers. Our professional guerrilla units, who have successfully put into practice the creative style and tactics of the new era, have not suffered any losses in Bakurê Kurdistan.

Based on Rêber Apo's remark that "the greatest technique is the person himself," the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla have also challenged the occupiers in the skies of Kurdistan despite limited resources and difficult conditions, dealing a major blow to the occupiers' much-vaunted war tactics and denying them passage in the air as well as on the ground.

Chemical weapons, phosphorus bombs and banned explosives used

In April, the occupying Turkish army once again committed war crimes by using chemical weapons, phosphorus bombs, and banned explosives against our forces seven times, attempted to destroy our resistance tunnels with destructive and piercing shovels, and carried out 76 attacks by warplanes, 12 attacks by helicopters, 2 attacks by explosive-laden drones, and 9,693 attacks with heavy weapons, artillery, and howitzers.

Our forces intervened against invaders 17 times

Acting on the basis of legitimate self-defense, our forces have intervened against invaders involved in attacks 17 times. As a result of these interventions, one of the invaders was killed and five others were injured. Additionally, our forces destroyed a tank, two armored vehicles, two surveillance camera systems, one howitzer, two drones, and one jammer. On the other hand, an armored vehicle, a container, and a position were damaged, and a drone was seized.

Four of our comrades were martyred

Four of our comrades, who defended the sacred lands of Kurdistan against the occupiers with great sacrifice, fought selflessly for the honor of our people, and handed over the banner of struggle to us, to their comrades left behind, fell as martyrs in April. We once again remember our immortal martyrs, who are our past, present, and future, with love, respect, and gratitude."

The balance sheet for the month of April is as follows:

Turkish army attacks:

Attacks by fighter jets: 76

Attacks by helicopters: 12

Attacks with chemical weapons (phosphorus bombs): 3

Attacks with explosive-laden drones: 2

Attacks with banned explosives: 4

Attacks with heavy weapons, artillery and howitzers: 9,693

Intervention by the guerrillas:

Interventions against attacks: 17

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Over 40 ISIS mercenaries handed over to Iraq

ANF | 6 May 2025

The Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria continues its efforts to address the issue of ISIS mercenaries and their families held in the Roj and Hol camps. As part of a recent agreement between the Autonomous Administration and the Iraqi government, more than 40 ISIS mercenaries have been handed over to Iraq.

Under the supervision of the International Coalition, officials from the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Department of Foreign Relations of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria transferred more than 40 ISIS mercenaries to Iraqi authorities. The handover took place at the Til Koçer (al-Yarubiyah) border crossing.

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SDF thwarts two simultaneous ISIS attacks in Deir ez-Zor's eastern countryside

ANF | 6 May 2025

On Monday, SDF forces foiled two simultaneous terrorist attacks by ISIS cells in the towns of Dhiban and al-Shuhail in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor.

According to the SDF Press Center, the first attack occurred late Monday/Tuesday night, when an ISIS terrorist cell targeted a military post belonging to the Dhiban Brigade using rocket-propelled grenades

(RPGs). At the same time, a second terrorist cell attacked another military point belonging to SDF forces in al-Shuhail using PKC machine guns and AK-47 rifles.

"Thanks to the vigilance and readiness of our fighters, both attacks were successfully thwarted. Our forces engaged the attacking cells, forcing them to flee under heavy fire. No casualties were reported among our ranks. However, there were confirmed casualties among the attacking ISIS elements, though the exact number remains unknown," the SDF Press Center said.

The statement added: "Our forces remain steadfast in their mission to track down the remnants of ISIS terrorist cells, target their hideouts, and eliminate the threat they pose to the region and the world."

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Two SDF fighters martyred repelling ISIS attack in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 6 May 2025

In the afternoon hours of today, an ISIS terrorist cell launched an attack with machine guns on one of the SDF's military points in the town of Al-Bahra, in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor, the SDF Press Center reported.

According to the statement, clashes ensued between SDF fighters and the attackers, resulting in the martyrdom of two SDF fighters. The members of the terrorist cell fled the scene on motorcycles.

“This attack is part of a broader escalation by the terrorist organization against our forces in northern and eastern Syria, taking advantage of the ongoing chaos in the country. Our forces reaffirm their commitment to pursuing these terrorist cells until they are completely dismantled and the security and stability of the region are secured,” SDF stated.

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53 years ago, the execution of revolutionaries Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin İnan

ANF | 6 May 2025

53 years ago, on 6 May 1972, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan were hanged in Ankara. Their trial had begun on 16 July 1971. Gezmiş and his comrades were sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code’s 146th article, which concerns attempts to “overthrow Constitutional order”. According to legal procedure, a death sentence must be endorsed by Parliament before being sent to the President of the Republic for final assent. In March and April 1972, the sentence was placed before Parliament and in both readings the sentence was overwhelmingly approved.

After joining the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye Işçi Partisi), Gezmiş studied law at Istanbul University in 1966. In 1968, he founded the Revolutionary Jurists Organisation (Devrimci Hukukçular Kürulumu) and the Revolutionary Student Union (Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği).

He became increasingly politically active, and led the student-organised occupation of Istanbul University on June 12, 1968. After the occupation was forcibly ended by the law, he spearheaded protests against the arrival of the US 6th Fleet in Istanbul. Deniz Gezmiş was arrested for these actions on 30 July 1968, to be released on 20 October of the same year.

As he increased his involvement with the Worker's Party of Turkey, and began to advocate a National Democratic Revolution, his ideas started to circulate and inspire a growing revolutionary student base. On November 28, 1968, he was arrested again after protesting the US ambassador's visit to Turkey, but was later released. On 16 March 1969, he was arrested again for participating in right-wing and left-wing armed conflicts and imprisoned until 3 April. Gezmiş was re-arrested on 31 May 1969. The university was temporarily closed, and Gezmiş was injured in the conflict. Although Gezmiş was under surveillance, he escaped from hospital and went to Palestine Liberation Organization camps in Jordan to receive guerrilla training.

On 4 March 1971, Deniz Gezmiş and comrades kidnapped four U.S. privates from TUSLOG/The United States Logistics Group headquartered in Balgat, Ankara. After releasing the hostages, he and Yusuf Aslan were captured alive near Sivas province following an armed stand-off with law enforcement officers.

Their trial began on 16 July 1971. Gezmiş was sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which concerns attempts to "overthrow Constitutional order". According to legal procedure, a death sentence must be endorsed by Parliament before being sent to the President of the Republic for final assent. In March and April 1972, the sentence was placed before Parliament and in both readings the sentence was overwhelmingly approved.

On 4 May, President Cevdet Sunay, after officially consulting the Minister of Justice and Prime Minister Nihat Erim, refused to grant Gezmiş a pardon. He was executed by hanging on 6 May 1972 in Ankara Central Prison along with Hüseyin Inan and Yusuf Aslan.

Deniz Gezmiş was born in Ankara on 24 February 1947. He was one of the revolutionaries in Turkey who dedicated their lives to the socialist cause. In his last letter addressed to his father just before the hanging, he explained the spirit of sacrifice by the revolutionary movement of Turkey: "Men are born, grow up, live and die… The important thing is not to live for a long time, but to do more things in the lifetime… My friends who were ahead of me did not show hesitancy before the death… You should not have any doubt that I will not have hesitation…."

Today, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Huseyin Inan and the many revolutionaries like them are remembered in several places.

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At least 5 people killed in Latakia and Homs

ANF | 7 May 2025

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that unidentified armed individuals killed four civilians in the village of Ayn al-Jawze, part of the town of Ayn al-Sharqiyah in the countryside of Latakia, in western Syria.

The attack occurred while civilians were working on agricultural land. Among the victims was a child. SOHR stated that the attack was carried out at close range and had the intent of "elimination."

A similar incident occurred in the village of Balkese, west of Homs, where an armed group raided the village, killed a young man, and then abducted his father and brother, taking them to an unknown location.

According to SOHR data collected since the beginning of 2025, the number of people killed across Syria for reasons such as elimination or revenge has reached 619. Among the victims were 20 women and 8 children.

The report notes that such attacks have been increasing, particularly in regions outside of North and East Syria. The lack of security, social breakdown, and absence of a judicial mechanism to hold perpetrators accountable continue to endanger civilian lives.

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Alawite IDPs who sought refuge in North-East Syria tell of their ordeal

Cudi Îbrahim | Kobane | 7 May 2025

The civil war and power vacuum in Syria have led to systematic attacks targeting Alawite communities.

Alawite IDPs who fled the conflict in the country and sought refuge in the Autonomous Administration regions in North-East Syria told ANF about the serious violations they have experienced.

Y.R., who was forced to flee the coastal region, said that he, his wife, and children escaped from areas controlled by HTŞ (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) and sought refuge in the Autonomous Administration areas.

'What was imposed on us was genocide'

“HTŞ became an interim government, but what was imposed on us was genocide,” said Y.R., describing what they witnessed:

"After the regime collapsed, a so-called interim government was established. However, all we saw was theft, murder, and kidnapping. They were even taking women and children away. We were forced to leave Homs. The Autonomous Administration regions became the only place of safety and brotherhood. Here, all the communities have embraced us."

'There was no humanity in their faces'

Y.R. stated that the pressure increased exponentially with the HTŞ militants taking complete control: "They established so-called ministries and justice institutions, but they were all for show. Then armed groups such as Shishan, Igor, and others—who I consider to be terrorists—began looting villages. They were breaking into our homes, smashing doors to get inside. They were destroying belongings and taking whatever they could steal. They were grabbing young people in the streets and telling them to 'walk like animals.' If you refused, you would be executed. There was no humanity in their faces."

'For those who couldn't escape, the fate was to be beheaded'

Y.R. told how his villages were razed to the ground, explaining the scale of the genocide against Alawites as follows: "Between 10,000 and 15,000 people were abducted. Some were never found again. Women were systematically abducted and sold. Children were killed. Those who remained faced either death or fleeing at any cost. For those who couldn't escape, the fate was to be beheaded."

'Their faces looked savage, with long faces and no beards'

N.E., who fled a village in western Syria and sought refuge in the Autonomous Administration areas, described the horror she experienced as follows: "When we arrived in the Autonomous Administration areas, the most important thing was that we were rid of ISIS. While we were sleeping in the morning, they broke down our doors and entered our homes. One day, my husband was not at home; it was just me and my two daughters. They attacked us brutally; my two daughters clung to me out of fear. Their faces looked savage, with long faces and no beards. They broke all our belongings and insulted us (...) Our sheikh was killed in the massacre on the Syrian coast. Despite all the looting and killings, they said, 'We didn't do it,' but they were wearing Syrian security forces' uniforms."

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At least 10 civilians kidnapped in Tartus and Latakia

ANF | 7 May 2025

The attacks by groups affiliated with the Damascus government on civilians living in coastal cities of Syria continue. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that armed groups affiliated with the Defense and Interior Ministries affiliated with the Damascus government raided the village of Hebaba in the Direkiş city of Tartus. The groups, which damaged many homes and destroyed public property, forcibly detained 10 civilians and took them to an unknown location.

In the village of Idiye in the Cebla city of Latakia, forces affiliated with the government raided a home and damaged public property. The attack caused fear and anxiety among the villagers.

Alevite sheikh kidnapped

According to the latest information reported by SOHR, last night a patrol affiliated with the Damascus government forcibly took the Alawite sheikh Salih Al-Mensour, who lives in the village of Ras Al-Ein in the countryside of Jablah, from his home and took him to an unknown location. According to sources, the patrol members insulted Sheikh Al-Mensour and his family and tried to humiliate the religious figure of Arab origin. The villagers prevented the armed groups who wanted to kidnap the other family members.

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Feminicide

Twelve women murdered in Rojhilat in one month

ANF | 2 May 2025

The Kurdistan Human Rights Organization announced that twelve women were murdered by their married men in Rojhilat Kurdistan in April (2025).

Twelve women also lost their lives under suspicious circumstances in April.
The Kurdistan Human Rights Organization stated that 47 Kurdish women were murdered by their married men in Eastern Kurdistan last year, and 97 women lost their lives under suspicious circumstances.

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Women in Aleppo condemn attacks on Druze community

ANF | Aleppo | 2 May 2025

Dozens of women from the Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxmaqsûd) and Ashrafieh (Eşrefiyê) neighborhoods of Aleppo condemned the attacks on the Druze community.

Women at the press conference organized by Kongra Star said: "Certain groups in Syria that are pro-violence have recently been fueling sectarian violence provocations. Deaths due to national, religious and sectarian differences have increased at dangerous levels."

The statement emphasized that the threats fueled against sects directly target Syria's internal peace and all its people, and condemned the crimes and provocations committed against Syria's components.

The women also called on the international community to take a stance against the impositions of nationalist politics that are tearing apart the unity and solidarity of the Syrian people and leading them towards civil war.

The women also called on the Syrian people to stand in unity and solidarity against the provocations developed to cause a civil war in Syria.

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Three women murdered in the Kurdistan Region in one month

ANF | 3 May 2025

Rojnews data shows that at least three women were murdered, and four others died under suspicious circumstances in different cities of South Kurdistan in April.

One of the murders took place on 4 April in Maxmur (Mexmûr), where a 21-year-old woman was shot and killed by her brother.

On 6 April, in the Akre (Akrê) region, a woman was murdered by the man she was married to. Then, on 9 April, a woman was found to have been shot dead in Halabja.

The suspicious deaths include cases of women who reportedly died after falling into rivers or as a result of domestic accidents. One of them was Jiyar Mohammed, who was found dead in her home on 2 April in Bazyan, a district in Sulaymaniyah. Another was 20-year-old Reyan Osman, whose lifeless body was discovered in the Zap River on 8 April.

In the Kurdistan Region, only one woman was murdered in March, while two others died under suspicious circumstances. The recent rise in femicides is being followed with deep concern by women's rights organizations and civil society groups in the region.

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YPJ announces the death of five fighters in Manbij resistance

ANF | 3 May 2025

The General Command of the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) announced the deaths of five of their fighters, Nergiz Dilda Welat, Cûdî Tolhildan, Axîn Koçer, Sema Hesekê, and Tolhildan Serêkaniyê while fighting in Manbij on December 9, 2024.

The YPJ statement paying tribute to the fallen fighters reads as follows:

“Our comrades Nargiz Dilda Walat, Tolhildan Serekaniye, Judi Tolhildan, Akhin Kojer, and Sama Hasakah have become the heroines of our time through their heroic resistance. When Turkish forces and their mercenaries launched their attack on Manbij, these brave leaders and fighters advanced with unyielding determination to defend the city. Despite the ferocity of the occupation’s assault, our comrades, through various heroic operations, transformed themselves into a mighty barricade—like the Tishrin Dam—against the brutal enemy. At that critical time, when the bloodthirsty invaders besieged our comrades, they chose resistance and immortal life, following in the footsteps of the martyrs Arin, Avesta, and Barin. Driven by the spirit of vengeance, they refused to surrender or fall into captivity. Our five comrades fought the enemy until their last breath without hesitation. Comrade Tolhildan Serekaniye was martyred in direct combat, while the remaining four comrades, when their ammunition was depleted, detonated their last grenades upon the enemy, choosing martyrdom.

The path illuminated by these five martyred comrades will forever remain our guiding goal as we intensify the struggle. Through their ultimate sacrifice, they have become the guarantee of this great people’s revolution. Despite the continuing occupation attacks, they stood firm and fought with unwavering resolve. We pledge to carry forward their struggle tirelessly until we realize the dreams of our martyrs.

We extend our deepest condolences to our freedom-loving people, who continue to defend the gains of the revolution and the dignity of the homeland, and especially to the families of our esteemed comrades Nargiz Dilda Walat, Tolhildan Serekaniye, Judi Tolhildan, Akhin Kojer, and Sama Hasakah. As the Women’s Protection Units, we reaffirm our commitment to following in the footsteps of our martyrs until the aspirations of our fighters are fulfilled and our homeland achieves its freedom."

The identity of the fallen fighters are as follows:

First-Last Name: Edla Ehmed

Nom de Guerre: Nergiz Dilda Welat

Mother's Name: Emine

Father's Name: Mihemed

Date and Place of Martyrdom: 9. December 2024 / Manbij

First-Last Name: Sozdar Mihemed Ebdullah

Nom de Guerre: Tolhildan Serêkaniyê

Mother's Name: Gulê

Father's Name: Mihemed

Date and Place of Martyrdom: 9. December 2024 / Manbij

First-Last Name: Kafa Mohammed Jasim

Nom de Guerre: Cûdî Tolhildan

Mother's Name: Zahra

Father's Name: Mohammed

Date and Place of Martyrdom: 9. December 2024 / Manbij

First-Last Name: Rozîv Cuma Mihemed Lo

Nom de Guerre: Axîn Koçer

Mother's Name: Emşe

Father's Name: Cuma

Date and Place of Martyrdom: 9. December 2024 / Manbij

First-Last Name: Rama Xelîl Xelil

Nom de Guerre: Sema Hesekê

Mother's Name: Rojîn

Father's Name: Xelîl

Date and Place of Martyrdom: 9. December 2024 / Manbij

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MKG: Nine female journalists remain in prison

ANF | 5 May 2025

The Mesopotamia Women Journalists Association (MKG) released its report on human rights violations in April 2025. According to the report, two female journalists were detained last month, while nine female journalists remain in prison.

The MKG report emphasized that female journalists are subject to "double pressure" and stated: "News reports in the public interest are being criminalized, and the right to information is being suppressed through repressive policies. Journalists in prison are facing isolation, barriers to accessing healthcare, and communication restrictions. This situation stands as a dark stain on Turkey's record of freedom of expression and press freedom."

The association stated that, in addition to physical pressure, access restrictions and content removal of content on digital media have intensified.

Violations in April

Two female journalists were detained.

Four journalists were summoned to the prosecutor's office to give statements.

Two journalists were mistreated.

Two journalists were prevented from reporting.

Seven jailed journalists were subjected to human rights violations in prison.

New cases were brought against three journalists.

Two journalists were sentenced to a total of 3 years and 4 months in prison.

17 journalists are still on trial in 11 separate cases.

Nine female journalists remain in prison.

Two journalists had their social media accounts closed.

MKG called on international organizations to fulfill their obligations and act independently of the judiciary, stating: "Journalism is not a crime. The voice of every journalist who writes the truth is the collective voice of society. We will continue to strengthen solidarity against oppression and censorship."

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Killer of Hevrin Khalaf appointed commander of the 86th Division

ANF | 6 May 2025

The Syrian Ministry of Defense in Damascus has appointed Ahmad al-Hayis (Hatim Abu Shaqra), the mercenary leader who ordered the assassination of Future Syria Party Secretary General Hevrin Khalaf

(Hevrîn Xelef), as the head of the 86th Division. The appointment of Shaqra, who was accused of committing war crimes by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has sparked outrage among Kurds.

Ahmad Ihsan Fayad al-Hayis, a prominent commander within the Ahrar al-Sharqiya mercenaries, was responsible for the assassination of Hevrin Khalaf and her driver, Ferhad Ramadan, in October 2019.

In 2021, the United States Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on Hatim Abu Shaqra and several members of the Ahrar al-Sharqiya mercenaries for human rights violations, including the mass killing of hundreds of civilians held in a prison.

The department cited crimes such as the abduction of Yazidi women and children and the integration of Islamic State (ISIS) fighters into the ranks of Ahrar al-Sharqiya.

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YPJ: The genocide against Alawites is now being repeated against the Druze

ANF | 6 May 2025

In a statement, the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) wrote that the jihadist ideology imposed by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria has deepened sectarian conflicts and has recently caused chaos in the coastal regions through massacres and acts of genocide.

The statement stressed that "the same genocidal brutality once inflicted on the Alawites by the jihadist system is now being directed at the Druze." The statement noted that HTS, through its "*divide et impera*" policy, seeks to sow discord among social groups in order to suppress communities that embrace values of freedom and autonomy.

The YPJ underlined that the Druze, an ancient community, have resisted oppression throughout history, and highlighted that women are among the groups most severely harmed by jihadist ideology.

The statement continued: "The foundation and only true guarantee for building a democratic and free society is self-defense. As women, by taking the lead in this sensitive phase in Syria, we can ensure peace and security across the region.

Through struggle and the wisdom of collective reason, we will build a life of freedom. Once again, we emphasize that the only solution for Syria is to construct a free life through the organized will of women. The greatest response to the massacres committed against the peoples of Syria will be to take part in legitimate self-defense with an organized and collective consciousness, and to achieve a democratic Syria that embraces all women and peoples in a peaceful way."

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Ecocide

Protest against plans to build a solar power plant in Kulp, Amed

ANF | Amed | 6 May 2025

In the district of Kulp in Amed (Diyarbakır) province, protests are taking place against a planned large-scale energy project: a 25-hectare solar park is to be built on communal grazing land. Residents of neighboring villages and environmental activists accuse the operator of illegally pushing through the project by manipulating an environmental impact assessment (ÇED). They are demanding that the permit be revoked immediately.

Dispute over the use of communal land

Specifically, the project concerns a pasture area jointly used by the villages of Cixsê (Ağaçlı), Xurûc (Kaynak), and Tiyaxs (Narlıca). The company VBZ İnşaat plans to build a facility there with around 30,900 photovoltaic modules and a 17 MWh lithium-ion storage facility.

Criticism has been sparked by the fact that, according to official statements, the area is meant to be "fallow land." However, according to residents and the Diyarbakır Bar Association, it is actively used as pasture land—a crucial distinction, as land used for agricultural purposes enjoys special legal protection.

Bar association files complaint

According to the Environmental and Urban Development Commission of the Bar Association, the ÇED documentation did not show the actual area. Instead, photos of another, unused area were inserted in order to obtain a positive environmental assessment. Lawyer Berfin Kılınç, a member of the commission, stated that criminal charges had been filed against this alleged deception. At the same time, a lawsuit was filed with the 4th Chamber of the Diyarbakır Administrative Court to revoke the project approval.

Kılıç said: "These pastures are the livelihood of the local people. A project of this magnitude will pose a massive threat to traditional livestock farming. The distance to residential buildings is only 48 meters—which is also extremely problematic from a legal perspective."

Those affected warn of displacement and environmental destruction

Resistance is also forming locally. During a protest yesterday, residents of the affected villages emphasized that they fear for their economic livelihoods and cultural roots.

Agricultural engineer Şermin Şeker (30) from Cixsê said: "This land is not just soil, it is our history, our identity. With the construction of the solar power plant, we are not only losing our pastures, but also the livelihood of our animals – and thus our own."

Some residents believe that the plant would create heat islands, alter the microclimate, and impair the region's habitability in the long term. Criticism of the increasing industrialization of rural areas is not an isolated case, but part of a larger problem: the conversion of rural land for economic interests without sufficient consultation with the affected population.

"We won't give in"

70-year-old Hatun Demirhan expressed her concern particularly poignantly: "We are not city people. This land is our home, our livelihood, the air we breathe. Companies come here without listening to us – and want to drive us out. But we won't give in."

75-year-old Nuriye Şeker also expressed her determination: "If the project goes ahead, everything here will die – people, animals, nature. I will fight it until my last breath."

Legal dispute ongoing – project not halted for the time being

Despite the ongoing lawsuit and public criticism, the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning, and Climate Change has issued a positive environmental impact assessment for the project. A decision by the administrative court is still pending. Until then, the population's hopes rest on the judiciary – and on growing public interest in the case.

What is a "ÇED"?

The Turkish procedure known as "Çevresel Etki Değerlendirmesi" (ÇED) corresponds to an environmental impact assessment. Only if the decision is positive may large-scale projects such as industrial plants, mining or solar parks be implemented. However, if the report contains incorrect information or false statements, there may be criminal and administrative consequences.

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Pastures under threat because of fraudulent environmental report

ANF | Amed | 7 May 2025

A solar power plant project is planned for the shared pastureland of the Ağaçlı, Kaynak, and Narlıca neighborhoods in the Kulp (Pasur) district of Diyarbakır (Amed).

The plant, proposed by a construction company named VBZ, is set to cover an area of 25.71 hectares and will consist of 30,909 solar panels along with a lithium-ion energy storage facility with a capacity of 17

megawatt-hours. The project, which targets land for pasture, has sparked strong reactions from villagers and local residents.

It has come to light that the photographs labeled as "barren land" in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) file submitted by the company do not reflect the actual pastureland. Through this deception, the company was able to obtain a "positive environmental impact" report.

Application filed Bar Association

On 11 March, the Bar Association filed a petition with the Diyarbakır Administrative Court requesting the cancellation of the "Positive EIA" decision and a suspension of execution.

In the application submitted by the Bar Association, it was emphasized that the photos labeled as “barren land” used in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) file did not reflect the actual pasture area. The application included the following regarding the area where the company received a “positive EIA” decision: "Additionally, in the pasture area planned to be opened to Solar Power Plant (SPP) activity, there is a large and functional pond at the center that supplies water to all animals in the village, which can be clearly seen during on-site inspection and in satellite images. However, on page 67 of the EIA report, it states, ‘there is no wetland in the project area,’ deliberately concealing the pond. After we identified and submitted this issue in writing during the Evaluation and Decision Committee (EDC) phase, unrelated photos from the EIA announcements (online system) were removed and replaced with photos of the actual location."

The application also stated that there are dry stream beds in the area where the panels are to be installed and that the project route intersects with these stream beds. It emphasized that the area is located in a region with active fault lines and landslide risk. The report noted that the project site is situated on map sheet K45 of the 1:100,000 scale Environmental Plan for the Adıyaman, Urfa, and Amed Planning Region, and that the adjacent parcels are agricultural lands. "The densest silk farming and cocoon production in Turkey is carried out in this village, where the subject project is planned," it said.

The application drew attention to the fact that the rural neighborhood that will be most affected by the SPP is also concealed in the EIA report: "The village most affected by the project is Buduka village, which is just 48 meters away from the project site. On page 13 of the EIA report, it states: ‘The project site is 1,760 meters from the center of Eskiağaçlı neighborhood, and approximately 48 meters from the nearest structure.’ These structures located 48 meters away belong to Buduka rural neighborhood. However, this fact is concealed in the EIA report, attempting to legitimize the occupation of Buduka’s pasture area."

The application further stated that the proposed project will destroy the community’s livelihood and force residents to migrate from their living areas. It also warned that the large-scale electricity production project, especially due to its storage system, would pose a direct health risk to residents through high-voltage lines and electromagnetic waves.

The application also noted that the project is planned to be completed in eight months and requested a suspension of execution.

Additionally, the Diyarbakır Bar Association filed a criminal complaint with the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office for "forgery of private documents" and "misuse of public duty" for inserting misleading photos of barren land into the EIA report, despite the area being green and water-rich.

They want to sever us from our roots

Villagers said that they will fight to protect both their own living spaces and those of their animals. Şermin Şeker (30), an agricultural engineer and resident of Ağaçlı village, emphasized that the aim is to depopulate the region and implement destructive projects, voicing her opposition to the plan with the following words:

"Our pasture is being occupied here, and our animals will have nowhere left to graze. The heat generated by the plant will severely affect us as well. The project site is not far from our homes, our living spaces, our houses are under threat. Our essence is tied to this land, and they want to sever us from it. As a young woman, I am fighting against this project, and I will continue this struggle. We know very well that this project offers us no benefit. That is why we reject it."

They cannot confine us to the cities

Among those who joined the protest was 70-year-old Hatun Demirhan, a resident of the village who stood side by side with others despite her age and walking stick. Expressing her anger at the project, she said: "Where do they expect us to go? This land is ours. We do not want anything here that will harm us. We make a living from our own labor; we earn money through our animals.

These companies only care about their own interests, not ours. We have been here for years, but they just arrived and now want to drive us out. They want to remove us from this place. But we are not city people; we could never survive in a city. This land is where we breathe, it is everything to us. We will not allow this project to go forward. We will do whatever is necessary.

I am 70 years old. Even if not for myself, I must resist for my children and grandchildren. This land must be passed down to the next generation. They cannot confine us to the cities."

All living beings will be harmed

Nuriye Şeker, a 75-year-old resident, also shared her thoughts on the planned project:

"What I want is humanity. Today, they want to destroy these villages for their own profit. We survive here through our gardens and our animals. While we live simply and peacefully, they want to push us into the cities.

We will not allow this project to happen, not even if it costs us our last drop of blood. Even if I have only one day left to live, I will not accept this project. It will harm every living being here. If we lose our green space, what will we feed our animals?"

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Human Rights Violations

DFG report on May 3: Freedom of the press in Turkey still under heavy attack

ANF | Amed | 3 May 2025

On World Press Freedom Day on May 3, the Dicle-Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG) based in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır) presented its monthly report on violations of press freedom in April. The findings show that media workers in Turkey continue to face imprisonment, censorship, and criminal prosecution.

"Without a free press, there can be no free and democratic society," said the DFG report, which outlines how pressure on media professionals has continued to increase dramatically, from house searches and charges to new arrests.

36 journalists still in prison

According to the DFG, eight journalists were jailed in April alone, bringing the total number of media workers currently imprisoned in Turkish prisons to 36. In addition, there have been threats, attacks, and restrictions on journalistic work on the ground: one journalist was attacked and another was threatened by the police. One journalist was deliberately prevented from reporting, and a detained journalist reported violations of her rights.

Criminal prosecution also remains a key tool of intimidation. In April, 47 journalists faced proceedings in 28 different cases. Six of them were sentenced to a total of nine and a half years in prison. New investigations were launched against five media professionals and charges were brought against 13 others.

International criticism grows – but repression continues

In the latest Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranking of press freedom worldwide, Turkey ranks 159th out of 180 countries – in the "very serious" category. Developments in 2025 confirm this assessment. According to the DFG, a total of 65 journalists have been detained since the beginning of the year, 25 of whom remain in custody.

A particularly controversial ruling was handed down in April against Swedish journalist Joakim Medin, who was given an 11-month suspended prison sentence for insulting the president. The DFG considers the ruling a targeted attack on foreign correspondents and an expression of a repressive judicial strategy: "Criminalizing journalism is itself a crime." Medin is also facing a second trial, in which he is accused of membership in a terrorist organization.

Censorship on social media and online

Parallel to repression on the streets and in courtrooms, digital censorship is also continuing to spread. According to the DFG, 171 social media accounts were blocked and six pieces of journalistic content were banned in April. The association is particularly critical of the growing role of international platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) and, more recently, Bluesky, which are increasingly cooperating with Turkish authorities.

In addition, seven websites were blocked last month—another attack on digital freedom of expression.

Demand for May 3: Freedom of the press is a fundamental prerequisite for democracy

On World Press Freedom Day, the DFG called on the Turkish authorities to immediately release all imprisoned journalists. "Journalism is not a crime, persecuting it is. A democratic society without free media is inconceivable – and Turkey is increasingly moving in the opposite direction," the DFG statement concluded.

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Kurdish artist taken to undisclosed location after arrest by Iranian forces in Maku

ANF | 3 May 2025

Ministry of Intelligence agents arrested Hassan Ahmadi, a Kurdish artist from Maku, on 27 April, taking him to an undisclosed location.

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that the agents raided Ahmadi's home and arrested him without a warrant after searching the property.

Despite repeated efforts by Ahmadi's family to find out about his fate, the security and judicial authorities have so far refused to provide any information about his situation.

Previously, Ahmadi's nieces, Sarya and Avin Ahmadi and Rojbin Afsoun, were arrested by security forces during Newroz celebrations in Orumiyeh, West Azerbaijan Province, and were released after a period of detention.

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Kurdish must be recognized as an official and education language

ANF | 7 May 2025

Associations, political parties, and civil society organizations that continue their efforts to promote and teach the Kurdish language have launched a series of actions and events as of 3 May, in anticipation of Kurdish Language Day on 15 May. Between 4 May and 1 June, numerous conferences, marches, and panel discussions will be held. The central demand of these events will be clear: "Status for Kurdish language, education in Kurdish."

It must be an official and educational language

Among those who took part in the announcement was Bahar Peker, an activist from the Free Women's Movement (TJA). She called for resisting assimilation policies and urged people to "embrace our language." Peker highlighted the endangered status of the Kirmanckî dialect in particular and said: "We need to take Kirmanckî courses. We must send our children as well."

Emine Caynak, also an activist from the TJA, stressed that a people is recognized by its language. She said: "We must keep our language alive. Whatever responsibility falls on us as women to ensure Kurdish becomes a language of education, we will fulfill it."

Gülbahar Ateş, co-spokesperson of the Language Commission of the Diyarbakır (Amed) Branch of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), emphasized the vital link between language, identity, and existence. She said, "Language is the existence and identity of a people, and that is why it matters. For this reason, Kurdish should be spoken everywhere, at the market, in the streets, wherever we are."

A call to families

Kurdish language instructor Rıraf Roni underlined that Kurdish is the identity of the Kurdish people. Roni said: "Language is indispensable. That is why the Kurdish language is the key to Kurdish freedom. It represents the political status of the Kurdish people. Every Kurd, from the youngest to the oldest, must speak, read, and write in their mother tongue. They must live their daily lives in Kurdish. Families must speak Kurdish with their children."

Cemile Turhallı Balsak, co-spokesperson of the Language and Culture Commission of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), emphasized the need for the Kurdish language to be granted official status. She said, "You cannot guarantee the survival of a language that has no legal status. Kurdish is an ancient language. It has survived for thousands of years. For the past forty years, Kurds have been fighting for their language. Across all of Kurdistan, people are resisting in defense of their language. We must strengthen and expand this struggle until we reach our goal."

One of the participants, Mine Karakaş, condemned the ongoing assimilation policies against the Kurdish language. Karakaş said, "For one hundred years, policies of assimilation have been imposed on the Kurdish

language. This is not limited to language; it targets our culture and identity as well. If the language is forgotten, everything is forgotten. That is why mother tongue is so important. We must protect it."

Kurdish language educator Dilan Güvenç also voiced the demand for official status. She said, "Kurdish must be an official language and a language of education. We must defend and preserve our language in every field."

Semra Akyüz, co-mayor of the Çınar (Xana Axpar) Municipality, concluded: " We want to read in our own language; we want to think in our own language. Let Kurdish be an official language."

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Interview

Karasu: President Öcalan should participate actively and effectively in the PKK congress

ANF | 2 May 2025

In the second part of this in-depth interview, KCK Executive Council Member Mustafa Karasu said that Abdullah Öcalan should participate actively and effectively in the PKK congress.

You emphasize that those in power are not taking any clear, practical steps. What stage has the process reached so far in your assessment?

For them, for the PKK to convene a congress and dissolve itself is most essential. This demand was answered. Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] made a call in this direction, and we said that we would fulfill the requirements, but conditions must be created to ensure that this congress is held in a healthy way. We have said before that the founder of this party is Rêber Apo. The PKK cannot take such decisions without convening a congress. Even if the PKK congress convenes, it still cannot take such decisions if Rêber Apo does not participate. He must be enabled to actively participate. This congress will not be a congress that will last for a day or two. He may not be able to participate directly, but there are more than enough opportunities to participate now. The technique is so advanced. Rêber Apo can participate in such a congress in several ways.

There is nothing in the PKK, in the freedom movement, that speaks against holding a congress or wants to block it. It is not only taking place because the government has not fulfilled the requirements. The whole public should be aware of this. If Rêber Apo is not enabled to participate actively and effectively, such a congress cannot take place. In other words, the decisions that Rêber Apo stated in the call cannot be taken. That can only happen with his participation.

Now, of course, we still want this process to develop and deepen. This is also the approach coming from Rêber Apo. There is nothing in our approach, in the approach of Rêber Apo, in the approach of public opinion, or in the approach of Kurdish society that would hinder the process. On the contrary, there is very strong support by all democratic forces, political parties, and society in general for shifting this process to legal and political grounds. Even international powers, from Germany to the US, have expressed their support for such a process. The internal as well as external conditions are favorable. So, if the Kurdish question, the issue of Turkey's democratization, is not brought to a political and legal ground, if decisions are not taken to bring it to a political and legal ground, if parliament is not activated to bring it to a political and legal ground, the government is, of course, responsible for this.

For such a process to reach certain stages, for it to develop, it is essential for the parliament to step in. How will anything happen without the parliament stepping in? What will the word of any minister, anyone's word, mean? The parliament must be activated, and decisions must come from there. A solution that does not involve the parliament cannot be a solution. We have said that we will take the necessary steps if the conditions are met. There is no problem in this regard. The problem is, what steps will this government take? How will it engage the parliament and create the political and legal ground? This is what needs to be discussed. They just say, "Hold a congress and stop the armed struggle". This is not the way.

Since Rêber Apo has made this call, they themselves have to do what is necessary. After the reading of Rêber Apo's 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society', our dear friend Sirri Sureyya Onder emphasized that all this can only be realized if legal and political grounds are provided. The state delegation in Imrali also approved this statement. The government must fulfill its requirements for the development of this process.

In a few days, the declared and implemented unilateral ceasefire will be two months old. During this time, the Turkish army has continued to attack the guerrillas and the areas in which it is located. Within this framework, the guerrilla forces have launched a couple of actions that fall within the framework of legitimate self-defense. What is the message coming from the guerrillas?

After the call for a ceasefire, the attacks against the guerrillas had to stop. This is something that had been emphasized in 2013. When the process started in 2013, the clashes had stopped, and the attacks had stopped. Now the process is being taken to a new, more advanced stage. Why aren't the attacks stopping? This is the approach of some circles seeking a cheap victory. They have attacked for so many years. In 2017, 2018, 2019… they always said that they were so close to victory, but at the end, what was always the result? They failed to achieve their goals. Now they are continuing these attacks in order to gain some cheap victories. They are still calling from helicopters and dropping leaflets from airplanes to the guerrilla areas to call for surrender. Look at this shamelessness! Where is the sincerity? As if the guerrillas would surrender. They fall for their own mentality that they created throughout these nearly fifty years of war. It is this very understanding that is currently the biggest obstacle to the solution of the Kurdish question.

If that is the situation and that is the position that the Turkish state takes, then a different stance can be adopted in response. Then it is up to the command of the guerrilla to question what this is all about and, if necessary, to decide to sacrificially fight. This is about a society, about a struggle that cannot be stopped by such an attack. It is up to the guerrillas to respond, and I can openly say that if things continue as they are, the guerrillas will find tougher ways to respond. It is unacceptable that they want to try to break the unilateral ceasefire, in which there are no planned major actions and operations on our part; they will come and attack without restraint. For our part, we declared a ceasefire, and they want to wipe us out. If

this continues to be their attitude, the guerrillas will find an appropriate response. Anyone who attacks during a ceasefire is only interested in annihilation. And the guerrilla will not allow annihilation and will develop appropriate responses.

The ruling AKP has significantly increased the pressure on the entire opposition. The latter is resisting this and is insisting, among other things, that early elections take place. How do you assess the opposition's rapprochement?

We assess the attitude of the majority of the opposition as positive. Sure, the CHP has made great mistakes in the past. They have committed crimes. They paved the way for the systematic and forceful appointment of trustees. Now they are dealing with them themselves. We have criticized them a lot in the past, but since this process, the attitude of the CHP administration has been positive. They say that they support the process and that it is necessary to approach the issue on a democratic dimension. They support the issue being brought to parliament.

Now, if the AKP government, the AKP-MHP coalition, really intends to solve the Kurdish question, if they want to solve it on the basis of Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood, what should they do? Thank and involve the opposition in this process. This is what any government would do. Can there be anything more valuable and meaningful than this if such a situation arises, if the current government starts a process on this issue and the opposition supports it? But now, the opposition is wanted to be eliminated. It is almost as if the opposition is being told, "Don't get involved in this". The approach towards the opposition is crippling this process from the very beginning. The fact that this process does not reach the desired result is partly the result of this understanding. It is important to get public support, the support of the whole society. Only with the support of society can this process move forward. As they say, in 2013, there was no support from society, there was no political support, the CHP was against it, the MHP was against it, and so it didn't work. Now, since the biggest opposition force is supporting it, it must be given due value. It is necessary to criticize this attitude of the AKP government.

Isn't the existence of the Kurdish question Turkey's most fundamental problem? Putting so much pressure on the opposition, trying to exclude it from the process, only enlarges the problem. Both Erdogan and Bahceli were talking about the survival of Turkey and the state. If it is a question of survival, then it can be solved by social consensus. Social consensus is very important in this regard. If this is not being done, it needs to be seriously criticized. In this respect, the opposition's demand for early elections is justified and legitimate. We already wanted elections to be held immediately after the municipal elections of March 31, 2019. The preference of society had shifted. Governments survive and govern based on the tendencies of society. But on March 31st, it was clearly shown that the government's social base had shrunk and the opposition's had risen significantly. In any other place in the world, early elections would have been called immediately. We made a call at that time, but the CHP did not pay attention. It was talking about 'normalization' and so on. But this government does not tend towards any form of 'normalization'.

The forces that are elected by the will of the people and have their support will have a much easier time solving the issue. In this sense, it is their logical right to call for early elections. In this situation, it only falls to us to assess the existing situation. The other day Eren Keskin questioned, "Will the Kurds wait for the government to change?" He is right in this questioning. But there is an existing government now. If it decides to take steps to move the process forward, then we will not oppose it and say that we are waiting for another government. Our stance is that we are always ready for a democratic solution to the Kurdish

question. If the government does not show an appropriate attitude, it only reveals and exposes its own reality. That is how we see it.

Let me also take this opportunity to say this. Some opposition groups are also not approaching the truth. There are those who speak on some opposition TV channels, questioning what the DEM Party is doing and if it has made an alliance with the AKP. There are approaches that express a kind of paranoia. The current situation is not about what those in power say or don't say. It is about the issue of democratization. This means that they have to take on more responsibility themselves. They must develop their own plans and take the initiative. If the government doesn't take a step, then they have to criticize even more and build up pressure. All opposition media and political parties need to put pressure on the government. They must publicly question why the government is stalling, why it is not producing any solution. This is a issue of democratization. This is how we and the Kurdish people see it. Without democratization, the issue cannot be solved. With our attitude, we are forcing steps to be taken for democratization. The rest of the opposition should also push for this.

Developments in the region also have a strong influence on Turkey's policy. The conflicts between Turkey and Israel in Syria have recently increased. However, there are also attempts to come to an agreement. What do you have to say about the conflicts in Syria, and what is really behind Erdogan's anti-Israel mask?

Turkey is supposedly anti-Israel, and Israel often publishes statements using rhetoric against Turkey. But one shouldn't take Turkey's evaluations against Israel very seriously, because they do not reflect the reality. Turkey's statements are to satisfy its own public opinion. Because public opinion in Turkey is sensitive about Palestine and Gaza. It reacts to the massacres taking place in Palestine. That's why they use anti-Israel rhetoric. Erdogan makes statements from time to time, but they do not reflect his true politics. Soon everyone will see this more clearly. Turkey and Israel will come to a reconciliation. This was revealed in the meeting between Netanyahu and Trump. Trump said that he will do it and told Netanyahu not to be too harsh against Turkey.

So, with Trump coming to power, there will be a reconciliation between Turkey and Israel. But this will be with some pressure from the US. Still, the problems between Israel and Turkey will continue at a certain level because Israel does not trust Turkey. And even if Turkey reconciles with Israel, it reconciles due to politics, due to certain US pressure. Israel has hit the places where Turkey was going to settle, and some Turkish engineers were killed. At this level, Israel lashed out at Turkey.

In the Middle East, the US will act and do what Israel says. It will not confront Turkey; it will reconcile. But this reconciliation will mainly be a reconciliation that is in Israel's interest, that is, a reconciliation that takes Israel into consideration. Trump will make such a compromise.

Turkey is in a very difficult situation right now; it is stuck. It is not comfortable politically and economically. In an environment where there is so much unemployment in Turkey, where the problems are aggravated, where there is no comfort, where Turkey is confronting the Kurds, and where it is in conflict with them, Turkey will submit to such a compromise. It has no other choice.

In Syria, the Baathist regime has collapsed, but the problems still continue. The Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is held up as a possible solution to the problems. The Kurdish conference for unity and a common attitude took place in Qamishlo. To what extent can it contribute to a solution to the situation?

Yes, HTS came and settled in Damascus, but with its understanding and mentality, there will be neither stability nor a solution in Syria. Let alone being a solution approach, it is an approach that paves the grounds for conflict, an approach that will create instability. From this point of view, the approach of the Democratic Autonomous Administration in North and East Syria and the program it puts forward can be the only solution for Syria. If there is to be a solution in Syria, if Syria is to be truly democratized, of course the model of North and East Syria will have a strong impact; the Rojava Revolution will have a strong impact. That is what can be highlighted.

Not only Druze and Alawites, but also the majority of Sunni Arabs see that HTS will not be a solution. HTS should not be seen as an organization supported by Sunni Arabs. It has the support of at most 30 percent of Sunni Arabs. The rest of them do not accept HTS. The Arab people do not accept HTS's monist, oppressive, and self-setting approach. The east of Syria, for example, has always wanted to live more autonomously from Damascus. This was the case in the past, and it is the case now. In this respect, of course, the Rojava Revolution will play a role in the shaping of North and East Syria and all of Syria in the future. Its understanding of women's freedom, its approach to other peoples, its democratic understanding… All of these will have an impact on the shaping of the new Syria.

In this respect, the conference is, of course, important. Previously, the ENKS was one with the mercenaries and the gangs, one with the invasion attacks of the Turkish state. In other words, they were opposing the Rojava Revolution. They stood against North and East Syria. But when the Coalition went to Damascus, the alliance they were in fell apart. They had no other choice. They tried to come to a compromise with the Autonomous Administration, with the PYD and the other parties. In this respect, both the PYD and the people of North and East Syria have shown a really mature approach. Until yesterday, they were opposing and supporting the invaders. They supported both the occupation of Afrin and the occupation of Serekaniye. They sided with the Turkish state, the mercenaries, and the gangs. But when that process ended, they realized that it was not working; they had to come to an agreement with Rojava. The people of North and East Syria and the Kurds did not say "no" to them. They said, "If they leave the alliance, if they will not continue their old attitude, if they will not side with the Turkish state's occupations, if they will not side with those mercenaries and gangs, if they will come to the side of the Kurds, this is a good thing." And the Kurds welcomed them. Yes, this conference should be seen like that.

It is a good thing that they are united like this, that a section of the Kurds give up siding with the forces fighting against the struggle here, against the gains in Rojava, and side with the Kurds. In this respect, we considered this conference important. The co-presidency of our Executive Council sent a message, saying that we support it.

Of course, this conference is related to the process initiated by Rêber Apo. Rêber Apo wanted the relations between the Kurds to improve and to continue the work for a national conference. He has this approach. If we remember, in 2014, when Rêber Apo initiated such a process, he called for a Kurdish conference. This still accounts for the current process.

Of course, it is also important to note that the Turkish state is the most hostile to a Kurdish conference and Kurdish unity. In this respect, Rêber Apo's call, the softening of relations with Turkey, facilitated the organization of such a unity conference, a joint conference among Kurds. In this respect, we also saw the conference and their forming of a joint delegation as positive. While doing this, they should think about the democratization of the whole of Syria. It is necessary to defend the Kurdish people, but Kurds should also play their role in the democratization of Syria. Otherwise, if they just say "Kurds are my people" or if Syria is not democratized, it will not make much sense. Tomorrow, this non-democratic regime will form new alliances and will again attack the Kurds. In this respect, this conference should not only contribute to creating Kurdish unity, but it should also care about the democratization of Syria. It must play its role in this regard.

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Opinion

Kurdish Resurrection: Entrusting the PKK to the hands of history

Rauf Karakocan | 2 May 2025

As a new phase in the discussion of a resolution to the Kurdish question takes shape, and as the topic of the dissolution of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the laying down of arms enters the public agenda, recognizing the truth of lived history and choosing to consign the PKK to the past with reflection rather than haste becomes all the more vital. It is a matter of grounding the future on a foundation that honors the past.

As the exceptional place of the PKK in the Kurdish freedom struggle is remembered, etched into the minds and hearts of all patriotic, revolutionary, democratic, and socialist individuals, a historic chapter, with all its strengths and shortcomings, is being closed. In such a meaningful moment when Kurdish existence is once again a central issue, the documentary Kurdish Awakening presents the PKK as a movement whose theoretical and practical-organizational legacy will undoubtedly continue to live on in the spirit of new revolutionary and socialist constructions.

The PKK, which has led a relentless struggle for nearly half a century, is now seen as completing its historical mission. Yet it is certain that the developments it has triggered will leave a lasting mark for many generations to come. The documentary Kurdish Awakening is a profoundly meaningful effort that brings together the experiences, lessons, and insights of the past through the voices of first-hand witnesses, creating a comprehensive body of work.

Preserving the knowledge and documents of this resurrection story for future generations and transforming them into a living source of meaning bears the responsibility of immortalizing a struggle. This film

brings together the fallen, who were among the most powerful sources of strength and legitimacy in this fight, as well as the living heroes, the social base, and long-time allies of the movement. The emotional atmosphere created by the documentary is already making its presence felt.

Kurdish Awakening shows that portraying the PKK with justice while doing honor to its long history of struggle is no less demanding than the PKK's own practices of resistance and rebirth. To speak from the full depth of the movement's memory with its wealth of knowledge, emotional depth, and intuitive power is to go beyond a documentary and create a work of living meaning.

There is hardly anything the history of the PKK has not witnessed. It has touched the lives of people from every segment of society. Its memory holds space not only for its supporters but also for its opponents. Whether in the mountains or in the prisons, the PKK has drawn profound lessons from a struggle where resistance and betrayal often went hand in hand in every aspect of life. Through this documentary, a great legacy is being left to the peoples, to future generations, and to history itself.

The documentary Kurdish Awakening, which recounts this story, is significant in its effort to preserve the collective memory that the PKK has painstakingly built, stitch by stitch, thread by thread, like digging a well with a needle, and aims to pass it on to the future. It serves as a bridge between the present and the future, built from the memory that continues to move forward. And the conclusions to be drawn from the historical and societal lessons told by that memory crossing the bridge will be both searing and deeply instructive.

One of the most significant issues to be formally documented through this film is the question of what the PKK is, what it has brought about, and what it ultimately aims to achieve. This documentary offers a historical narrative that emerges from the deep roots of the natural society destroyed over the past five thousand years by the dominant forces of central civilization. It brings to life the paradigm of the PKK, one that draws strength from its natural foundations, builds on democratic values, embraces ecological awareness, and centers women's liberation, laying the groundwork for a new sense of society and envisioning the construction of an ethical-political community.

Although the PKK originated as a Kurdish movement, it has produced significant gains not only for the Kurdish people and their geography but also for the diverse faiths and identities of the broader region. It has become a leading force of both thought and practice, playing a unifying role while preserving the uniqueness of various social communities. The documentary Kurdish Awakening closely examines the story of these historical phases.

Throughout its history, the PKK has carried the legacy of all leftist, socialist, and revolutionary movements that have taken root across the Middle East. It has remained loyal to their memory, embraced their causes, and transformed them into the very rationale of its struggle. The PKK has walked alongside all peoples of the region, sharing a common destiny and building a practice grounded in solidarity. Today, through the paradigm it represents, it has proven itself as a pioneer of a new model of social construction, one that fosters a culture of coexistence among peoples and gives it a democratic character. The documentary Kurdish Awakening presents this culture of shared life as a visual experience, blending it with artistic depth and chronicling its development within a comprehensive and chronological narrative.

The PKK has become a center of attraction for revolutionaries from across the world, from Latin America to the United States, Europe, Russia, and various regions of the Middle East. Through its inclusion of cadres from diverse identities and faiths, it has evolved into a movement with a truly international character. As viewers watch the documentary, they will witness the vivid and colorful world of the PKK and encounter the extraordinary stories of individuals whose lives intersected within the movement.

There are countless aspects in which the PKK stands out with its unique characteristics. One of the most significant is that its foundation is built on labor. Every value gained through struggle, won tooth and nail, rests on the foundation of immense effort. To understand the development of the movement, one must first grasp the distinctive style, rhythm, and tone of its leadership. That understanding is the first step toward truly knowing the PKK.

The documentary Kurdish Awakening opens the doors of a vast laboratory to all segments of society. In every life story told, in every frame shown, in every social and personal reflection expressed, viewers will encounter a truth that may lead them to say, "This is my story." Within this laboratory, audiences will have the opportunity to observe a historical evolution, from mythology to religion, from philosophy to science, from the Neolithic age to centralized civilizations, and from the local to the universal.

Above all, this documentary allows viewers to witness, in the flow of a river, the uprising of a fragmented, colonized society that dared to stand alone against the global capitalist system, armed only with their bare hearts and unbreakable will.

Everyone who contributed to Kurdish Awakening, from content creators to every person involved in the production, has earned deep and heartfelt gratitude.

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Kurds are suffering under HTS

Zeki Bedran | 2 May 2025

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan is once again threatening Rojava and the Kurdish people. As always, the justification is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), since no one in the world considers the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) or the People's Protection Units (YPG) to be terrorist organizations. For years, Turkey has tried to have them added to international terrorist lists, but it has failed. Since 2014, the YPG and SDF have been fighting against the Islamic State (ISIS) alongside the International Coalition. They have never been involved in any acts of terrorism anywhere in the world. North and East Syria remains open to the world, governed by local assemblies and hosts the most democratic and freedom-oriented administration in the Middle East.

The Turkish government now says it wants to visit Abdullah Öcalan at Imralı prison and declare, "Let's make peace, let's build a Kurdish and Turkish alliance." Yet at the same time, it continues to issue threats against North and East Syria. The supposed justification is once again the PKK, because if it openly declared hostility toward the Kurds, their very existence, or their political status, it would be condemned by the international community.Kurds, like all peoples, have the right to exist and to exercise their rights. In-

stead of recognizing this, the government continues its aggression and sustains its anti-Kurdish stance by targeting the PKK. Since the PKK is already listed on so-called terrorist lists, Turkey uses this as a blank check to legitimize its harshest actions against Kurds everywhere.

Why can't the Kurds return to Afrin?

Is the PKK currently in Afrin? If not, why are the people of Afrin (Efrîn) still unable to return to their lands? What took place in Afrin was an act of ethnic cleansing against the Kurdish population. The Baath regime has collapsed, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has effectively positioned itself as the ruling authority in Damascus.

Armed groups loyal to Turkey have publicly declared that they have joined the Syrian army. Al-Jolani (Ahmed Al-Sharaa) said that the people of Afrin would return to their homes. He even visited Afrin himself. Yet the people of Afrin have still not been able to return. Even Al-Jolani himself has admitted that they are not yet in control of the area and that they have failed to establish security. Who is threatening this security? It is, of course, Turkey and the armed groups under its command. HTS lacks the courage to tell Turkey to leave or to withdraw its armed factions from the region.

Weren't SNA supposed to be part of the Syrian army?!

For months, the Turkish army, together with the armed groups under its control, attacked the Tishrin Dam region. The Turkish government repeatedly announced that all of these groups had agreed to join the Syrian army. If they have truly joined the army, then these attacks must be the responsibility of the administration led by HTS. Yet HTS claims it is not engaged in combat and that it maintains a ceasefire with the SDF. The agreement they signed with the SDF on March 10 even included a provision for a general ceasefire across all of Syria. Now a new ceasefire agreement centered on the Tishrin Dam is being discussed. Under this plan, forces affiliated with HTS would be deployed between the SDF and groups affiliated with the Syrian National Army (SNA). But weren't the SNA and other factions already integrated into the Syrian army? If that were truly the case, they would already be under HTS's chain of command. And if the SNA is not loyal to the Turkish army but instead reports to HTS, then why would HTS need to send in a separate force to stand between them?

It is clearly driven by anti-Kurdish hostility

The people who were forcibly displaced from the regions of Girê Spî and Serêkaniyê are also unable to return. These areas remain under the occupation of the Turkish army and are controlled by its affiliated armed groups. In Afrin and across these regions, there is no safety for civilians or their property. Abductions, ransom demands, torture, and threats continue without pause. For years, people's homes and property have been seized and looted, and their return has been systematically blocked. This is not about the presence of the PKK. The policy being pursued here is clearly rooted in anti-Kurdish hostility.

Turkey is imposing a regime more oppressive than the Baath

The Turkish state is pressuring HTS to deny any form of political status to the Kurdish people. The first government to recognize and support the so-called coup constitution issued by HTS was the administration of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey. The Turkish National Security Council

(MGK) has taken this even further, going so far as to adopt binding policy decisions on Syria. In one such decision, the Turkish National Security Council declared its vision for Syria as a unitary nation-state with a centralized government and full political integrity. Yet the overwhelming majority of the Syrian people favor a decentralized, democratic system. Rather than supporting this, Turkey is trying to impose a regime that would make the Baath era seem moderate by comparison.

Is HTS really closer to the peoples of Turkey?

Even at its weakest, HTS declared a transitional constitution that was more repressive than that of the Baath regime. Historically, the most democratic constitutions are written after revolutions, when a system has collapsed and opposition forces and pro-democracy movements have risen. In such moments, no single party holds absolute power. Popular demands for freedom are usually acknowledged, and democratic rights often secured. HTS does not represent Syrian society. It is not organized across the country. It remains under global scrutiny, is listed as a terrorist organization, and operates under international sanctions. Yet despite this, HTS has imposed an extremely centralized and religion-based constitution, intending to govern the region with it for four or five years. It is clear that as the group becomes more organized and gains more power, it will establish an even harsher regime. Turkey openly supports this constitution, this government, and this regime. It also wants to see the Kurdish people crushed under HTS and similar factions. But is HTS more legitimate than the Kurds or their political organizations? Is it truly closer to the peoples of Turkey? The Turkish government has been blinded by its hatred of the Kurds.

It is clear that the problem is not the PKK

The ruling AKP continues to push for the disarmament and dissolution of the PKK through discussions held in Imralı. Abdullah Öcalan, in an effort to end the war and foster peace in the region, has even called for the PKK to disband. But if an organization is ready to disband, why is it still being treated as a threat? And why are Syrian Kurds being targeted in the process? This clearly shows that the real issue is not the PKK. The problem is the intent to destroy the Kurdish people and deny them any form of political status, all under the guise of fighting the PKK.

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The background of HTS attacks on the Druze

Fırat Dicle | 4 May 2025

On the evening of April 28, forces affiliated with HTS (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) launched a heavy weapons assault on the Jaramana area, located south of Damascus. The attacks quickly spread beyond Jaramana to Sahnaya, Ashrafiya, and Suwayda, resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians.

As previously reported by the Lekolin.org site in its 7 and 13 March articles, Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT), in coordination with HTS, has devised covert plans for the region. During a meeting at the Turkish Embassy in Syria, MIT officials allegedly instructed HTS commanders to gain control over the Suwayda region and its outskirts, prevent Druze forces from expanding militarily, and create chaos in response to Israeli airstrikes targeting Turkish-occupied T-4 and Palmyra bases. As part of this

plan, MIT and HTS allegedly used AI to fabricate a video appearing to show a Druze leader, Marwan Kiwan, insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Immediately after this, attacks against the Druze population began. ISIS members and foreign jihadists within HTS targeted Druze students in Homs and Damascus before turning their focus to Jaramana, where dozens of civilians were massacred on the night of 28 April.

Despite the Druze religious leader condemning both the fabricated audio clip and the attacks, Turkmen groups within HTS, closely linked to the Turkish state, intensified their assaults in Jaramana, Sahnaya, Ashrafiya, Thala, and Suwayda. Initially, the Damascus government remained silent. Later, an agreement was reportedly reached between Druze sheikhs and the government, but it did not have any real impact on the ground. The attacks have continued unabated.

Israel stepped in

Following the HTS attacks, Israel initially issued a verbal condemnation, then announced that it had struck a jihadist convoy en route to attack Druze communities. Although Israeli military and political officials declared they would not tolerate attacks on the Druze, their response has not been a deterrent. The situation remains uncertain.

Risk of further massacres

The Druze community is well-organized but lacks military experience. Continued attacks may lead to a full-scale massacre of the Druze population. The massacres that previously targeted Alawites are now being extended to the Druze. These attacks are just the initial manifestations of a deeply rooted ideology in its weakest form. As HTS gains strength, it will likely carry out more massacre-oriented attacks against the peoples of Syria and the region. This is just a preparatory phase. Therefore, the peoples of Syria must urgently establish self-defense and grassroots organizational structures.

Multiple messages behind the attacks

The attacks against the Druze are intended to send multiple messages to various parties.

Turkish President Erdoğan once said: "Even if we are not the game-makers, we are good at spoiling games." Aware that Turkey has no seat in the future of Syria, Erdoğan aims to sabotage any potential future equation and spread war across a broader region. The Turkish state is signaling all ethnic and religious groups in Syria, Israel, the Coalition, the Arab world, and especially the Kurds.

By retaliating against Israeli airstrikes on the T-4 and Palmyra airbases, Turkey is also sending a message that Israel cannot operate freely in Syrian airspace. While Israel considers the Druze as allies, Turkey wants to block any such alliance and remind Israel of its limitations in Syria.

The Turkish state is also trying to disrupt Israel's agreements with Arab states. If successful, Turkey would present itself to the Coalition forces as a disruptive but necessary actor in the region.

By threatening the Kurds, especially those who held a conference in Qamishli on April 26, Turkey aims to force them to accept HTS's terms. At the very least, Turkey seeks to prevent Kurdish unity through acts of mass violence, and is already preparing the ground in Druze cities. Turkmen groups loyal to Turkey have

also threatened the Kurds. Additionally, Turkey seeks to block any potential Kurdish-Israeli relations by distracting Israel in southern Damascus while launching a new offensive against the Kurds.

The attacks on the Druze and Alawites are part of a larger strategy to target all peoples of the region. Therefore, it is essential not to remain silent in the face of these attacks. Preventive measures must be taken immediately—otherwise, it may be too late. Only organized forces can stop these massacre campaigns. There is no time to lose.

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Turkey responds with hostility to the Kurdish Unity Conference

Zeki Akil | 5 May 2025

Kurdish parties and political circles held a Unity Conference in Qamishlo. This conference was generally welcomed with satisfaction among Kurds. For years, the Kurdish people have longed for unity. Kurds have fought a lot, risen up, paid heavy prices, but have never managed to achieve unity. The reasons for this disunity are more or less known. Kurdistan was divided among four states. These powers have always worked to prevent Kurdish unity. Additionally, Kurdish uprisings were generally fragmented and local. There were no leaderships or organizations capable of achieving national unity.

Division and disunity were almost seen as the destiny of the Kurds. This perception was first overcome under the leadership of Öcalan. Although the PKK emerged in Northern Kurdistan, it did not remain regional. It organized throughout all parts of the North. It included people from all belief groups and different tribes, gathering them around itself. As a socialist movement led by an enlightened youth, it based itself on the working class and the poor. Thanks to its ideological and class-based choices, it embraced the masses. With Öcalan's move to Syria, the PKK gradually became the party and vanguard force of all four parts of Kurdistan. It took root among the people there as well. As a force of ideas, it influenced intellectuals and youth. Even though parties like the KDP, which represent Kurdish elites, continued to obstruct national unity, the Kurdish people largely managed to unite. Unity had been achieved at the grassroots level, among the people, but some political parties still resisted coming together.

In Rojava, the Kurdish people largely achieved unity. In their fight against ISIS, they gave tens of thousands of martyrs and wounded. Autonomous administrations were established in the liberated regions. The people both governed themselves and ensured their own security. The only force in Rojava that did not join this unity and opposed the autonomous administration was ENKS. ENKS is actually affiliated with the KDP, the Barzani family. ENKS did not fight against ISIS. It sided with the occupying Turkish state. They joined the so-called "Coalition" controlled by Turkey. When these gangs occupied Afrin and other regions, ENKS was part of them. It did not define Turkey as an occupier. It continuously blamed the PYD and PKK and systematically carried out a propaganda war against the autonomous administration.

When the Ba'ath regime collapsed, ENKS was left in limbo. The Coalition also disbanded. Turkey had no rights or status to offer ENKS. ENKS members initially went to Damascus but returned empty-handed.

Öcalan's "Peace and Democratic Society" call on February 27 had a positive impact in Kurdistan and around the world. Additionally, Öcalan sent a delegation to speak with Southern parties, including the KDP. He wanted to include them in the process. Due to the positive atmosphere these initiatives created and some efforts by certain states, the KDP allowed ENKS to participate in the Unity Conference.

Thanks to the patient and constructive approach of Rojava parties, ENKS was included in the process. This unity was important for the Kurds. It had long been desired, but never realized. What was once considered impossible has happened. This increased the Kurdish people's hope of achieving unity across all of Kurdistan.

In this conference, Kurds discussed the type of regime they wanted in Syria and their demands, reaching common decisions. The Kurdish people rejected the old status quo and denial. They wanted the opportunity to govern themselves in a democratic Syria. They were not demanding a separate state. Their proposed solution was to live within Syria with their identity, will, and culture.

The fact that a people demand rights stemming from their very existence was once again met with hostility by those who govern Turkey. Turkish officials bombarded the Kurds and Rojava with threats. Ahmet Şara declared these demands unacceptable. They have no concern for democracy or such a worldview. Yet the rulers of Turkey say, "Let Kurds and Turks be brothers, let the PKK disarm," while continuing to say, "Let the Kurds suffer." With this mentality, how can Kurds and Turks be brothers? How can bonds of trust be built between them?

The Turkish state, on a small island like Cyprus, insists on establishing a Turkish state even though the whole world is against it. For fifty years they've been pushing for two states on that island. But they oppose even the idea that Kurds govern themselves locally. If, instead of Kurds, it were Turks living in Rojava right now, would people like Erdoğan and Bahçeli hold the same views and threaten the Turks? Of course not. But when it comes to Kurds, there are no limits to their hostility. Turkey even prefers HTS, a group viewed with concern and caution by the world, over the Kurds. They want to crush the Kurds under HTS and the gangs it has allied with.

Does anyone really know how many ISIS members are in HTS? Of course not. But it's clear there are many. And Turkey prefers these dark-minded forces over the Kurds. Kurds and Turks need to think much more deeply about how to build true brotherhood between them!

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